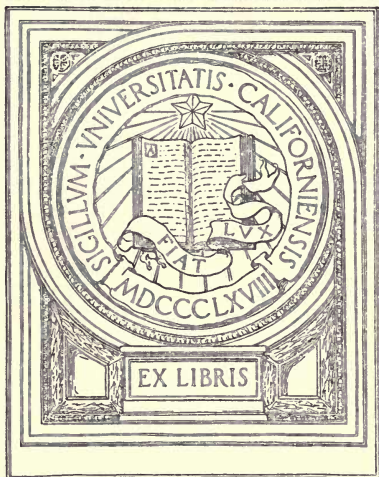


JACK HARKAWAY AFTER SCHOOL-DAYS



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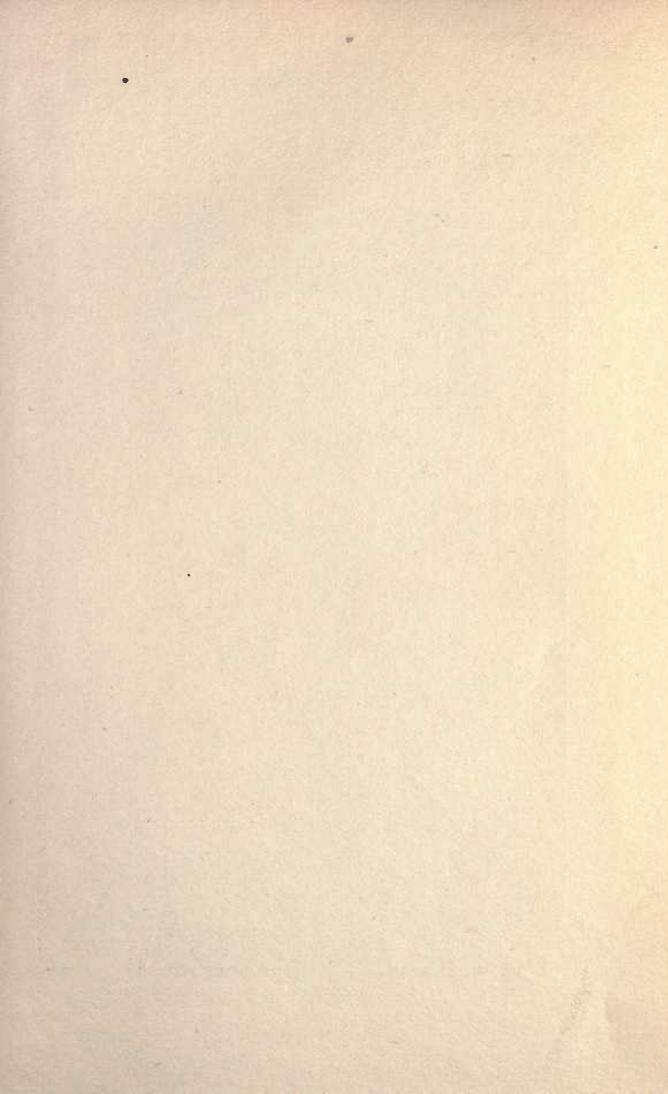
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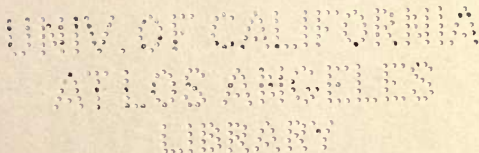
JACK HARKAWAY

AFTER SCHOOLDAYS

BY

BRACEBRIDGE HEMYNG

ILLUSTRATED



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JACK HARKAWAY

AFTER SCHOOLDAYS.

CHAPTER I.

GETTING ON BOARD.

"COME on, Dick. Here's the ship," exclaimed Jack.

"All right ! I'm close behind," answered Harvey.

It was eleven o'clock in the morning, and the tide served in about an hour, so that the ship "Fairy" would have to start on her outward voyage in a short time.

The two friends had come down by rail from Fenchurch Street to Blackwall, where the ship was lying.

Most of their kit had been sent on board the day before, by an outfitter in one of the tortuous streets in the neighbourhood.

But they had brought a lot of things down with them from London, with which the thoughtful care of their parents had provided them.

Jack's father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Bedington, and Harvey's mother, accompanied them to Blackwall, but having been on board twice before, the ladies did not care to go again, in the bustle and confusion of sailing, for they knew they would only be in the way.

Mr. Bedington had escorted the ladies to a private room in the famous Brunswick Hotel, promising to go and see the boys on board, and return to them when the ship went out of the dock, and stand with them on the pier to wave a handkerchief and wish them a last good-bye.

Both Dick and his friend were groaning beneath a weight of parcels, and they with difficulty ascended the ladder at the ship's side.

The "Fairy" was a vessel of 1,000 tons burden, and

as trimly built and neat a craft as any lover of the sea could wish to sail in.

No one took any notice of the boys as they went on board.

Everybody was bustling about, appearing to do something.

All was confusion.

The boys knew their way about pretty well, for they had been on board three times before, and they proceeded below.

Going aft, Jack descended the companion, and Harvey said—

“Where shall I put the things?”

“Chuck ’em down here. Stow ’em anywhere for the present,” replied Jack, pointing to a corner near his bunk.

There was a tall, surly-looking young fellow standing by, smoking a short pipe.

He was in his shirt, and his sleeves were turned up, as if he had been at work.

Looking at Jack, he said—

“Are you one of the new hands?”

“Yes,” replied Jack, returning his stare.

“Oh! I’ve heard about you, and as I’m an old sailor and have made two voyages, you’ll have to knock under to me. Don’t you think you’re going to chuck things about here just as you please. Ask my permission next time.”

“Next week,” said Jack.

“What do you mean?” said the other.

“What I say. I’m a remarkably plain-spoken sort of a chap, but very simple. I’m so easily imposed upon; I was such a fool when I was at school that they sent me to sea to sharpen me up a bit.”

“You look it.”

“May I ask who you are when you’re at home?” continued Jack, with a stupid air, but giving Harvey a sly wink at the same time.

“That’s no business of yours. I’m senior midshipman on board this ship, and my name’s Wren.”

“Thank you. Do you live far from here?”

“What’s that to you?”

“I was thinking what a pleasure your poor father and mother must have lost in not coming to see you off. Do

tell me where you live. I feel quite interested in you—I do indeed."

"I live at St. Mary's," replied Wren.

"Where's that?"

"Axe," said the senior midshipman, turning away with a grin, and adding—"That's Whitechapel for ask and find out. You're not such a fool as you want to make yourself out; and perhaps you're clever enough to understand that we know a thing or two more than you land-lubbers."

"I have heard of St. Mary Axe. It is somewhere in the City, I believe," answered Jack. "Thank you very kindly for the information. It has taken a great weight off my mind. I feel better."

Wren stared at him as if he could not quite make him out.

Presently Jack said—

"In the boot and shoe trade?"

"What do you mean?" cried Wren, angrily.

"Ah, I see; fried fish and 'taters line, perhaps," continued Jack, with an innocent look.

"Come, you shut up, youngster," exclaimed Wren. "If I have any more of your cheek, I'll give you something which will knock you off your sea legs for a fortnight or more. My father's a merchant, and had ships of his own once."

"You don't say so," exclaimed Jack, in apparent astonishment. "I wouldn't have said anything if I'd known you'd been a merchant's son. Did your father really have ships once?"

"Yes."

"All his own?"

"Of course."

"Oh, my! fancy being the son of a swell who had his own ships! Were they ships like this?"

"Merchant ships," answered Wren.

"Great big ships! Well, I never! I'll always ask your permission before I do anything in future. Dick."

"Well?" said Harvey.

"Take your cap off. He's had his own ships—at least his father had, and he lives in the parish of St. Mary Axe."

"No, we don't. We live at Dalston."

"I thought you said——"

"That was only chaff. I see I shall have to teach you a thing or two. You don't seem to be over sharp, after all," said Wren, with a patronizing smile.

"I was pretty well when I came on board, thank you," answered Jack. "It was the ships that did it."

Harvey was laughing so hard that he had to turn round, and pretend to arrange the parcels to prevent Wren seeing him.

"Don't," he whispered in a plaintive tone to Jack. "I shall be ill. I'm bursting now."

"Burst then," replied Jack. "I haven't done with him yet."

"What have you got there?" asked Wren, pointing to the parcels.

"Literature," replied Jack.

"What?"

"Something to improve the mind in one bundle, and the rest's prayer-books."

"Go on," said Wren, dubiously; "you wouldn't bring half-a-ton of prayer-books on board."

"Yes, we did. They're all for the heathen when we get to China. I promised my mother I'd give them to the poor creatures."

"I thought it was something good to eat, and as you're sure to be sea-sick, I and Sinclair would have eaten it for you, and saved you the trouble."

"You're very kind. I wish it wasn't prayer-books now. But, if I may venture to inquire, who's Sinclair?" answered Jack.

"He's the other midshipman."

"Is his father a merchant, too?"

"Something of that sort."

"And has he got ships?"

"Shut up about ships, you fool. I hate a fellow who's an ass," cried Wren, angrily. "I shall have to lick you into shape with a rope's end, as the showman said to the young bear."

"What did the young bear say?" inquired Jack, pretending not to hear.

"It wasn't the bear; it was the showman."

"What did he say?"

Wren looked round for a bit of rope to give him a practi-

cal exemplification of what he meant, but not finding any, he simply said—"Shut up," and puffed away at his pipe.

"We'll drop the showman and the bear, and the ships," continued Jack, "and we'll talk about Sinclair. Is he a nice sort of messmate?"

"Very."

"Like you?"

"There's much of a muchness about us. We're rough and ready, and have made more than one voyage together."

"He must be nice if he's at all like you," said Jack, adding thoughtfully—"But I don't think I shall like him so well as I do you, because his father never had ships. Is there anyone else in our cabin?"

"We had six midshipmen last voyage, but only Sinclair and myself are left."

"How's that?"

"Between you and me and the foretop mainsail," answered Wren, "the captain is not all he looks, and he generally can't get fellows to make more than the single run out and home with him."

"Whew?" whistled Jack.

"I thought Captain Cuttle such a nice man," remarked Harvey.

"So did I; and so did lots of fellows. You don't find him out before you've sailed under him."

"How does he get men?" asked Jack.

"Oh, he hangs about schools and picks up boys, and spins them yarns, and all that," replied Wren.

"Why do you stop?" said Harvey.

"Oh, I'm all right. I'm well in with the owners, and Cuttle knows he must not say much to me, or——"

"What?"

"Well, I won't blab, but I could say more about Silas Cuttle than he'd like you or anyone else to hear. I'm cock of this walk, and if there's any dispute which is referred to the captain, you may lay your life he'll back me up through thick and thin. Is that good enough for you?"

"It's gratifying," replied Jack, "when you come to consider that you've shipped for a good five or six months' voyage."

Wren grinned rather savagely.

"I generally let all the youngsters know I'm master because it saves a deal of trouble. Sinclair and I are pals, but he daren't say much to me. We shall, I expect, have five midshipmen as they call them, though you're only apprentices perhaps. There's myself, Sinclair, you two and another land crab."

"What are you?" asked Jack.

"Well, of course I'm only an apprentice if you come to that. I had a premium paid with me, but I expect to be third mate soon. There are real midshipmen in the royal navy, and it sounds well to call us so; that's how it is."

"I'm astonished at what you say about Captain Cuttle," Jack observed, dropping his jocular air and becoming serious.

"You'll be more astonished before you've sailed far," replied Wren, with a grin. "You'll have something to put in your log, my hearty."

"What's that?" exclaimed a voice behind him.

"Oh, it's you, S'clair," said Wren, abbreviating his friend's name. "Glad to see you on board. Thought you'd join at Gravesend."

"So I should have done," replied Sinclair, a short, ugly, shock-headed boy who didn't know how to pronounce his 'h's, "only I spent all my money last night in Ratcliff 'ighway, and found it would be no bottle, as they say, to go in for another spree down the river. 'Ard up, my boy."

"I beg your pardon," exclaimed Jack. "You've dropped something."

"What's that, my sea griffin?" answered Sinclair.

"Only a letter or two."

"What?"

"One of those things belonging to the alphabet," continued Jack. "The letter H, I mean. 'Twas whispered in Heaven and muttered somewhere else, while echo caught faintly the sound as it fell. Don't you know the riddle? But I suppose you don't. You'd spell horse with an O."

"I'll give you something to say O for if you don't mind. Look out for squalls. You're a green hand and must pay your footing," said Sinclair, angrily.

"Plenty of time," answered Jack. "I am going on deck. Step out, Dick."

The boys trotted away, and Sinclair, who looked as if he had not had an hour's sleep all night, and had drank more than his shock head could stand, said to Wren—

"That's a nice pup, anyway."

"So I begin to think," answered Wren, "though I'm not quite up to his rig yet."

"Have you talked to him?"

"Yes. He's either a great fool or else he's been kidding me."

"Perhaps a bit of both. Never mind, wait till we're fairly in the Channel, and we'll cob him within an inch of his life."

"That's as certain as that we shall spend Christmas in the tropics," answered Wren. "He says he's got prayer-books here. I think it's grub. Let's overhaul his locker."

"Steer ahead," replied Sinclair.

And the two old tars approached the corner in which Jack and Harvey had deposited their little parcels, and began to look at them curiously.

CHAPTER II.

DROPPING DOWN THE RIVER.

ON deck Jack found his father. Mr. Bedington was looking round for him with a puzzled air, as if he did not quite understand the bustle and confusion which reigned everywhere.

"Oh, here you are, John," he exclaimed, "I expected you would come and meet me."

"I'm bound to turn up like a bad penny," exclaimed Jack.

"I don't think this is the time for such remarks," replied his father. "You have bade your mother farewell, and she is now in great grief at losing you. Remember that you are going away for a year at least, and that your friends are very anxious about your conduct and welfare."

"My dear father," said Jack, "will you kindly remember that I have heard all that before, and that I have promised to be as good a boy as I can?"

Mr. Bedington looked grave.

"Do you feel no sorrow at parting from me?" he said.

"I want to see the world."

"Then you don't feel anything. You are hardened," Mr. Bedington replied, with a painful intonation.

"I did not mean that," Jack answered, quickly, noticing the change in his father's voice. "I only love four people in the world. They are my mother, yourself, little Emly, and Dick Harvey."

"Well, well. I only speak for your good, as you ought to know by this time, I say that you are going away from us. I should like to see you show your sense of the separation."

"I'll cry, if it would please you," Jack said.

"There you are again. This perpetual levity gives me great uneasiness. You are like—like—what shall I say?"

"A trough full of dough with some yeast put in it, always rising," Jack suggested.

Mr. Bedington could not help smiling.

"I hope your jocular temperament will not involve you in serious disturbance with your future comrades," he said. "In the captain I have the utmost confidence."

"Have you?" said Jack. "That's more than I have, since——"

He paused, thinking it scarcely worth while to arouse his father's suspicion, when he had only heard a hint from Wren, which might or might not be well founded.

"Since when?" repeated his father.

"I did not mean anything. One of the fellows below does not speak well of him; that is all," he replied.

"Perhaps he has given his captain displeasure, and Mr. Cuttle has rightly reprov'd or punished him for it. Boys are rarely if ever satisfied with those who are placed over them. I should not listen, if I were you, to such idle tales. Endeavour, my boy, to do your duty, and if you know you are right, you may defy the world."

"But suppose," said Jack, "that you are not one of those beautiful boys you read of in story-books, and cannot always do your duty; what then?"

"Then you must take the consequences."

"I'm ready," answered Jack, in a good-humoured voice, "and can't say more than I have said; and that is, I will do the best I can, and that I am very—very sorry to leave

you and my mother, who ever since I thought about you have been as kind as it was possible for anybody to be."

"We have tried to be so, and it is now by your own wish, not ours, that you are going to sea. So, whatever result your venture has, you must not blame us," replied Mr. Bedington.

"I shall never do that. I'm big enough now to go on my own hook," replied Jack.

Mr. Bedington looked at him affectionately.

"Recollect one thing, Jack," he said.

"What's that, father?"

"You're my son, and the heir to a fine property."

"I am as likely to forget the latter as not, but the former, I shall never, never let slip out of my mind," replied Jack, warmly.

Mr. Bedington pressed his hand, and a voice exclaimed loudly—

"Any more for the shore? Now then, any more for the shore?"

"You're off, Jack," said his father. "Good-bye, and good luck go with you!"

"Never fear for me, father; I'm like a cat; I always tumble on my legs," answered Jack.

"You won't worry yourself, if you think of the home you've left and the kind friends?"

"Don't fret; I'll make new ones."

"Any more for the shore?" cried the voice a second time.

A sad expression stole over Mr. Bedington's countenance.

He was sorry at parting with Jack, more sorry than Jack was, if the truth must be told.

Captain Cuttle came up at that moment with his cheery smile, and his frank, open countenance, which certainly belied the character that the senior midshipman had given him.

"Never trust faces," was a maxim Jack had heard, and he looked doubtingly upon his future captain.

"I'd rather have Crawcour and old Mole to deal with," he thought,

"Now, sir; going ashore?" cried Captain Cuttle.

"Ah, captain, how do you do?" replied Mr. Bedington.

"Oh, it's you, sir. Now lad, bustle about. Glad to see you," answered Captain Cuttle, with a bland look and an oily smile, which he could put on when the occasion required it.

"You'll see to my boy?"

"He's right enough with me," answered Captain Cuttle. "Lord love 'em! I treat all my youngsters as if they were my own children. Sorry I didn't see you before. We've had half-a-dozen of champagne in the cabin, and, I should have been proud of your company. Must wet the anchor, as the saying is."

Captain Cuttle caught sight of Jack again.

"Step aft, my lad," he continued; "you're in the way here."

Jack thought he detected a dangerous gleam in those sly grey eyes which he had never seen before.

"Good-bye, father," he said.

"Good-bye, Jack, and God bless you!" answered Mr. Bedington.

Jack went aft, as his captain had ordered him, showing his appreciation of the golden rule of obedience to orders at an early stage of his career.

In a short time all those who were for the shore had gone, except one or two who had made up their minds to accompany their friends as far as Gravesend, where the ship was to lay to for the night, and where they could travel back without any difficulty, as the "Fairy" had to take on board a passenger at the last-named place, and look out for fresh hands to supply such of her crew as might be missing at the last moment.

It is not an unusual thing for a captain, when the roll is called over, to find several seamen absent.

Either they have been too drunk to sail, or they have changed their minds after signing articles, and the deficiency has to be made up by the crimps at Gravesend, as a ship cannot go to sea short-handed.

The gates of the dock were opened, and the "Fairy" sailed out.

Jack and Harvey posted themselves in an advantageous position, to catch a last glimpse of their friends as they went through the cut leading from the dock to the river.

"I wish I were like you, Jack," said Harvey, with a sigh.

"Why?" asked Jack.

"My father can't come to see me off, and I think he's rather glad I'm going. We've such a lot at home. He's only a clerk in the City, you know, and it comes hard upon him to have to keep half a dozen of us. How he paid the premium for me here I don't know."

"Keep up your pecker, old boy," replied Jack. "We'll make our fortunes in the East, and then we'll come back and astonish them."

"Look!" cried Harvey.

"Where?"

"On the pier. I can see your father and mother, and my mother. There they are, standing on the edge almost, to see us off into the river."

"Let's give 'em a cheer," said Jack Harkaway.

"Right you are," replied Harvey.

The lads took off their caps, and gave a ringing cheer, which Mr. Bedington answered from the shore.

"Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!"

The beautiful vessel glided slowly into the river with sails set.

Soon the stream caught her, and, aided by wind and tide, she dropped down the river.

Mrs. Harvey turned away and hid her face, as her tears fell fast, and Mrs. Bedington, who had made her acquaintance, tried to comfort her.

Harvey saw this, and he, too, began to cry.

"Dick," said Jack, "this won't do—blubbering."

"I can't help it. Mother's looking so cut up," replied Harvey.

"You are a man now and a sailor. It won't do to cry. Look at me," said Jack.

Harvey did look at him.

"Why," said he, "your eyes are as wet as mine; you're crying too."

"So I am, old fellow. I was only humbugging you. After all, we're only boys, and we can't help feeling it," answered Jack, in a noarse voice.

But in spite of their emotion, they kept the old pier in sight, and waved their hats, though the figures standing upon it were indistinct, and the only things they could make out clearly were the mud-begrimed bank of the Thames' low-lying shore.

"Come!" exclaimed a voice at Jack's elbow, "we've had enough of that. No snuffing; you'll find something to do."

It was Captain Cuttle who spoke.

The men were getting into their places and attending to their duty in a stupid sort of way, looking as if they had not revived from the night they had made of it before sailing.

The officers, however, were sober, and they saw that the necessary work was done somehow or other.

"Touch your cap when you are spoken to," continued the captain.

"I didn't know we were on board a man-of-war, sir," replied Jack, with his usual impudence.

"Never mind whether we are or not. I'll have discipline maintained on board my ship; touch your cap," said the captain.

Jack did so, and the captain went amidships.

"That's a taste of what we've got to expect," observed Jack.

"Yes," said Harvey; "he's beginning early."

"Rather. I think all that Wren told us isn't far from the truth."

They turned round with a sigh, and unexpectedly met an old foe.

"Hunston!" exclaimed Jack, astonished.

"Yes, my boy, it's me, as you truly remark, alive and kicking," replied Hunston, senior.

"I heard that one of Dr. Begbie's boys was coming, but I didn't think it was you!" cried Jack.

"Or you would not have shipped, eh?"

"Perhaps not."

"You see, we're destined to meet, and we'd best be friends; shake hands."

"I shan't. I don't want to be friends with you, because I know what your friendship means, and how treacherous you are," replied Jack.

"All right, my hearty, please yourself. It won't break my heart," said Hunston.

And he walked away with his hands in his pockets.

"Fancy that beast, Hunston, being on board," said Harvey, as he looked after him, blankly.

"I wish I'd known it, that I do," added Jack. "It

seems to me we are to have more annoyances on board ship than we ever bargained for."

"It can't be helped, unless we cut and run at Gravesend."

"I shan't do that; I'll stand to my guns."

"What you do, I'll do," replied Harvey, looking at his friend with confidence, "though I can't help saying I almost wish we were back again at Crawcour's."

"Don't turn tail at the start, Dick," said Jack, with a reproachful glance.

"I'm not turning tail, but I don't like Hunston being on board, and I don't like what I've seen of the captain, or what Wren said of him."

"They can't eat us or skin us. We shall be right enough. Don't funk," replied Jack. "Still it is funny Hunston should be here. I thought we had done with him for ever. I've licked him and can do so again, and he won't play any tricks with us, though he may be a better sailor, as he's been to sea before. If I'm afraid of anyone, it's——"

"Wren?" said Harvey.

"No, the captain."

The boys hung over the side, and looked in a melancholy manner at the river, which was running down in a muddy stream to the sea.

CHAPTER III.

TAKING IN A PASSENGER.

BEING a sailing-ship, and the wind not being very strong, the "Fairy" did not make very quick progress, relying almost entirely upon the tide.

She was heavily laden, and bound for Canton, in China.

There was accommodation for a few passengers, though she was not a passenger ship, but merely a trader.

New hands, like Jack and Harvey, were not molested by anyone, and did very much as they liked for the first day.

When the pier faded away, and the friends they had left behind were but dim specks, and then entirely shut out as they rounded a reach in the river, the boys turned to go below.

"We'll put things a bit straight," said Jack, "and indulge ourselves with a glass of currant wine and a slice of cake."

Not being in the habit of looking down on the deck, he did not see a coil of rope, over which he tripped, pitching into a tub of water, and getting up slightly wet, while the sailors laughed loudly.

"What cheer, my hearty?" exclaimed an old salt.

"I've had enough cheering," answered Jack. "I've been cheering till I'm hoarse."

At this the sailors laughed again, and to avoid their ridicule, Jack was glad to descend the ladder.

But he was in such a hurry to get below that his foot slipped.

He lost his hold, and rolled along the deck till he was brought up by a kick from Wren.

"I say!" he cried. "That's a nice way of coming below. You are not obliged to do it all of a lump."

"I couldn't help it," replied Jack, rubbing himself with a dismal expression.

To his surprise, Wren and Sinclair were eating various delicacies, which, at the moment, he did not suspect belonged to himself.

"You might ask a fellow to join you," he said.

"So we will. Help yourself," answered Wren.

Jack did so, and Harvey joined in when he came up.

Cake, oranges, and currant wine vanished like lightning.

Presently Wren and Sinclair were called for, and stuffing their mouths and pockets full of anything they could lay their hands upon, they went away.

"That was generous of them," said Harvey.

"Very," answered Jack. "It's more than I expected. Wren does not seem such a bad sort after all. Now let's put our things away."

"They'll be safe enough. The fellows won't bag our grub as they've got some of their own."

"I'd rather have them in my chest, though," replied Jack.

He turned round to open the packages, and to his disgust, found that they were all empty.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed.

"What's up, now?" asked Harvey.

"Bless their eyes," replied Jack; "they've been and gone and done it."

"Done what?"

"Why, we've been drinking our own wine and eating our own stuff. That's a good joke. Wren said we had something to learn, and it looks like it, rather. First of all I go and tumble over a rope and douse myself in a tub of dirty water, then I roll down the ladder, and now I find they've stolen a march upon us, and eaten our prog. We certainly have got something to learn, and must keep our weather eye open, Dick."

"It looks like it," answered Harvey. "But it's no use crying over spilt milk; let's go and look about us a bit."

Concealing his mortification as well as he could, he led the way on deck again.

Being on board ship was very different to being on shore.

They were continually in the way, and were pushed about from place to place, and once very nearly fell into the hold as the hatch was not down yet.

At last they got into the steward's cabin, where the first mate, Thompson, was taking a sip of brandy with Smith, the steward.

"Well, youngsters," said the mate, "how do you like the ship?"

"The ship's right enough," answered Jack. "It's the people on board I don't quite understand."

"You'll drop into your places in a day or two, and find everything go on like a piece of machinery," answered Thompson.

"When shall we get to sea?"

"We shall be in the Channel to-morrow. To-night we lay to off Gravesend to take in a passenger."

"Who is he?"

"I don't know his name, but he's going out to Canton in a hurry. An uncle has died and left him a tea-garden in China, and he's going to look after his property," answered Thompson. "I heard he's been a school-master, or something of that sort."

"I thought we'd done with schoolmasters," said Jack. "We've had enough of that sort of cattle."

"He can polish you up in your A B C when you've nothing else to do," answered Thompson, with a laugh.

Jack did not quite agree with this prospect, but consoled himself with the thought, that as the schoolmaster was a passenger, he should not come much in contact with him.

When they reached Gravesend, it was fully expected that the ship would drop anchor.

But the captain, finding his crew answered to their names, and that he had only to take a passenger on board at Gravesend, contented himself with taking in sail and making a signal for the boat to come alongside.

As the passenger was waiting with his luggage in a boat, the rowers soon put off and came alongside the "Fairy."

The luggage was quickly hoisted on deck, and the passenger, who was reported to have been a schoolmaster, and to have had a tea-garden left him near Canton by the sudden death of a relative, followed his luggage.

The boat dropped behind.

All sail was set, and the "Fairy" continued her way down the Thames.

Suddenly the passenger caught sight of Jack's face.

"Stop the ship! stop the ship!" he exclaimed. "I'll get out! Stop the ship!"

Attracted by his frantic gestures, the captain approached.

"What's the matter, sir?" he inquired.

"Stop the ship, I say! I'll get out!" continued the passenger with increased vociferation.

Captain Cuttle regarded him curiously.

Was he mad?

CHAPTER IV.

THE STOWAWAY.

"Stop the ship!" repeated Captain Cuttle. "What does the man mean?"

"I'll get out, I say. Let me out," persisted the passenger.

"Do you think you're in an omnibus? You won't have any chance of getting out until the pilot leaves, and then you'll have to pay a good price for being landed at Deal, and forfeit your passage. What's the matter with the ship? The owners sent me a telegram, saying you'd taken your passage at the last moment, and I was to pick you up at Gravesend. Have you forgotten anything important?"

"It isn't that," groaned the passenger. "It's Jack Harkaway. If I'd known he was on board this ship, I wouldn't have sailed in her."

"It's too late to give her a wide berth now," said the captain. "But what harm can one of my midshipmen do to you?"

"You don't know him as well as I do. Something dreadful will befall the ship. I know it will. We shall never get to our destination."

"What have you had to do with him?"

"I was his tutor. My name is Mole. I was Mr. Crawcour's senior master, and if anybody knows anything about Harkaway I'm the man. Little did I suspect that I was going to fall into a trap when I took my passage in the 'Fairy,' 1,000 tons register, A 1, at Lloyd's, seven years. Oh, dear me! This was a prospect I did not bargain for, when I hastily determined to leave my native land, on the occasion of my eccentric uncle's sudden death, and his demise to me by will of an extensive tea-garden in China, near Canton."

Captain Cuttle looked at Mr. Mole, and then at Jack.

The latter tapped his forehead with his finger significantly.

"Oh, it's like that, is it?" said the captain, in a low voice.

"Been so on and off some time, sir," replied Jack, raising his hand to his cap respectfully.

"Cranky, eh?"

"Touched in the upper story, sir. Got a tile off as we say. I don't believe he's got any tea-garden at all. It's a delusion. He said he was the Prince of Wales once, and wanted us to call him Albert Edward the First."

"All right. Leave him to me."

Jack saluted Captain Cuttle again, and went forward, where Harvey was waiting for him.

"Is that Mole?" asked Harvey.

"Yes."

"Our Mole?"

"Yes. Crawcour's Mole. He's the school-master who's had a tea-garden left him by his uncle," answered Jack. "Isn't it funny that he should come to sail in this ship?"

"Rather," ejaculated Dick.

It certainly was curious that Mr. Mole should have selected this particular ship to sail in.

An eccentric uncle of his, from whom he had long had expectations, had settled years ago in China, and hearing of his death from his solicitor, Mr. Mole determined to go at once to Canton.

He was left sole heir of his wealth, and being tired of drudgery in a school, he resolved that he would travel to China and look after his newly-acquired property.

Seeing by an advertisement in a paper that the "Fairy" was the first ship to sail for China, he took leave of his friends and booked his passage.

When he found that Jack was on board he became alarmed lest he should play him some tricks, and render his passage uncomfortable.

Captain Cuttle however allayed his fears.

"I'm master here, sir," he exclaimed, "and I make every one do as I please. My midshipmen are supposed to be young gentlemen, and if they don't behave like gentlemen, I'll skin them alive."

It was a fact, in spite of what Wren had said, that all the boys were midshipmen, and not apprentices.

They had paid a premium which was to be repaid them in the shape of wages, and they could leave the ship when their voyage was done, whereas had they been apprentices, the captain could have made them serve until their time was up.

In their cabin, in which they messed together, were bunks, on each side, and in these they slept.

The ship soon got into the Channel, and the pilot left her.

Then she went gaily on her voyage, favoured by winds that promised to make her passage a quick one.

Jack and Harvey were down with sea-sickness as soon as they got past the Norse.

Hunston, Wren, and Sinclair, laughed at them heartily, and told them they would be all right in a day or two.

It was early in the morning when Captain Cuttle was startled by the apparition of a pale and timid-looking lad, who approached him on the after deck.

He could scarcely stand, owing to the motion of the waves, and looked very miserable.

"Who are you, sir?" demanded the captain, sternly.

"A stowaway," answered the boy.

"Have you dared to come aboard my ship under false pretences?" thundered the captain.

"I thought I might, sir."

"What's your name and where do you come from?"

"My name's Maple, sir, and I come from Mr. Craw-cour's school."

"Maple?" repeated the captain, adding, "who put you up to this?"

Maple hesitated.

"Out with it."

"Hunston did, sir. I always liked him, and thought the sea would suit me. I knew my parents would not let me come, and so Hunston brought me down with him and smuggled me on board. He told me just now it was time to speak, but I feel so ill that——"

Here Maple felt sick, and rushed to the side of the ship.

"Pass the word for Mr. Hunston," exclaimed Captain Cuttle.

Hunston came up looking anxious.

"So you've been accessory to getting that useless worm on board, have you?" continued Captain Cuttle.

"It was his wish, and——"

"Take that," replied the captain, dealing him a blow in his face, which sent him rolling over the deck.

Hunston got up half stunned.

"I'll have it out of you," cried the captain, furiously. "You don't play your games with me for nothing. Out of my sight, and some of you take that boy below."

Captain Cuttle was showing himself now in his true colours.

Hunston did not reproach Maple.

He was glad to have him on board, because he knew, where Maple was, he should have a sneak and a toady always at hand.

But he vowed vengeance against the captain, and bided his time for an opportunity.

In a few days the fresh hands were well enough to come on deck and do their duty, which Jack soon learnt.

Maple and Harvey were slower.

Jack liked the life of a sailor, but Maple found out that he had made a mistake, for if there was any dirty work to be done, such as swabbing the deck, it was by common consent given to him; even his friend, Hunston, did not stand by him.

"You don't seem so lively," remarked Hunston, with a sneer, to Jack one morning, at breakfast, as Jack was munching a ship's biscuit, and drinking his tea.

Jack made him no answer.

"Captain Cuttle isn't Crawcour. Old Cuttle is one too many for you," continued Hunston.

"Wait a bit," replied Jack. "I've hardly had time to look around me."

The only two passengers were Mr. Mole and a naturalist named Blader, who was sent out by some scientific society to make explorations in the Indian Archipelago.

Mr. Blader had with him a favourite monkey in a cage, which stood in the saloon.

Jack had had his eyes on Jocko for some time, and one day, slipping into the saloon, unfastened the monkey, and put on his head a paper cap, on which he had written, in large letters, "Captain Cuttle."

Then he turned the monkey up in the captain's cabin.

Jack had scarcely had time to get on deck before he heard a smash, at which he grinned, for he knew the mischievous creature would jump from place to place, and smash everything breakable he came across.

The captain did not go below for half-an-hour, being a great drinker, which in some respects accounted for his ill-temper and savage disposition. He imbibed little glasses of spirits at short intervals.

Smacking his lips at the prospect of a dram, he opened his cabin door.

The place was in a state of horrible confusion.

A case of bottles was knocked down, brandy, rum, and gin, saturated the carpet, glasses were broken, his swinging looking-glass smashed, and many things that he prized lying in a heap irretrievably damaged.

Looking up for the author of the mischief, he espied the monkey.

"Who has done this?" he gasped.

Jocko nodded his head, and the captain read on his absurd-looking paper cap—"Captain Cuttle."

Seizing a chair, he darted at the monkey intending to brain him.

The creature was too quick for him.

Jumping on his shoulder, he gave him a claw in the face, and darting past him, made for the deck, followed by the irascible captain.

The monkey jumped and frisked about the deck, delighted at his newly-found freedom.

When the sailors saw him, and read on the cap "Captain Cuttle," they grinned and watched its antics with glee, which increased when they beheld the skipper following him.

In vain the captain chased the monkey from ship's end to ship's end.

He could not catch him.

"I'll shoot the brute," he cried.

Going below for a pistol, the sailors awaited the sequel with impatience, though they laughed long and loud when the skipper's back was turned.

It was a capital joke to them, for none of them really liked the commander of the "Fairym."

Mr. Blader was walking arm in arm with Mr. Mole as he inquired the cause of the commotion.

"Bless me! it's my monkey," he exclaimed.

When he saw the inscription on the cap he could not refrain from smiling.

Jocko giped, and chattered, and danced about the shrouds in a frolicsome manner.

Captain Cuttle now appeared again, armed with a single-barrelled pistol.

The monkey recognised him as his enemy, and dexterously leaping towards him, seized his cap, and ran up the shrouds with it.

"The fiend take him!" exclaimed the captain.

He levelled his pistol.

"What are you about to do? That is my monkey, Captain Cuttle," cried Mr. Blader, who really liked his pet.

"Stand on one side, sir. The beast has made a wreck

of my cabin, and by Heaven I'll shoot him," replied the captain.

"I protest that you will do nothing of the sort," answered Mr. Blader.

He ran to the shrouds, and called the monkey.

"Jocko—Jocko!"

The creature at once came to him, and nestled in his arms affectionately.

"I will make good any damage he may have done," continued the naturalist. "Reflect, sir, that the monkey could not have got loose of his own accord, and ornamented this cap with the absurd device it bears."

"Let him go or I'll shoot you," cried the captain, angrily.

"I shall not do so," replied Mr. Blader, firmly, who was a quiet, middle-aged man. "I shall protect my animal, and if you fire, I take this ship company to bear witness that my blood will be on your head, and you will be guilty of murder in the eye of the law."

Mad with rage, Captain Cuttle pulled the trigger and fired.

CHAPTER V.

LASHED TO THE MASTHEAD RIGGING.

AN old seaman, whose name was Slocum, happened to be standing near the captain.

Seeing his murderous intention plainly displayed in his face, he kept his eye upon him.

Directly his finger pressed the trigger, Slocum dashed his arm up.

The ball flew harmlessly through the rigging.

Finding his attempt to shoot either the monkey or its owner frustrated Captain Cuttle diverted his wrath upon Slocum.

"What the blazes do you mean by spoiling my shot?" he cried, still more furious than ever.

"Duty, cap'en," replied the sailor, touching his hat, respectfully.

"Duty to whom? Not to me."

Slocum pointed to the sky.

"There's one up aloft, and He's a skipper we owe a duty to. We've no right to take the life we can't give back," he said.

"Get out, you canting cur," exclaimed Captain Cuttle. "I'll have no mutinous dogs on board my ship."

With that he gave him a blow on the forehead, which caused him to fall bleeding on the deck.

The blow was a severe one, as it had been dealt with the butt end of the heavy pistol.

"Shame!" rose to the lips of the men.

But they were afraid to speak openly.

Some of them had sailed under Captain Cuttle before, and his character was well known in the merchant service.

So tyrannical was his conduct, that one ship which he had commanded came to be called the "Hell afloat."

Mr. Blader had hurried below with his monkey, and replaced him in his cage.

He took off the paper cap.

It was a sort of ordinary fool's cap, in which something had been wrapped.

In his hurry Jack had omitted to notice one thing.

This was of the utmost importance.

The paper had contained some articles which his mother had bought for him at a shop, and on it was written, in a small, running hand—

"Master John Harkaway Bedington."

Taking this in his hand, Mr. Blader ran up on deck.

He was just in time to see Slocum stagger forward, bleeding from the forehead, and supported by two of his shipmates.

"Look here, sir!" he exclaimed, handing the captain the paper.

Captain Cuttle took it and saw only his own name.

Thinking Mr. Blader wanted to add insult to injury, he crumpled it up in his hand.

"It's a fool's cap, and would fit you," he said.

"Stay; read the address on it, and you may find out the culprit," Mr. Blader hastened to exclaim.

The captain did so. His face darkened and he looked more repulsive than before.

"One of my youngsters," he muttered; "I had his character with him."

"Have you any one on board of the name of Harkaway Bedington?" continued Mr. Blader: "if so, the presumption is that he must be the culprit, though it does not follow absolutely that he is. Some one else may have used the paper, though it has his name attached to it."

"It's Harkaway safe enough. Don't stand jabbering there; we don't want any sea-lawyers here," said the captain.

"Captain Cuttle, as a passenger, I demand to be treated with proper respect and——"

"You've got the run of the ship—take it."

"You attempted my life, but, being of a forgiving disposition, I am inclined to look over that; yet if this course of conduct is persisted in, I shall be compelled to lay the matter before the proper authorities," replied Mr. Blader.

Captain Cuttle pushed him impatiently on one side, and went to where Jack was standing with Harvey.

Jack saw his fist clenched, and, remembering what he had done to Hunston, which had been a good deal talked about in the midshipmen's mess, retreated so as to avoid a sudden blow.

"What did you dress that infernal monkey up for, and turn him loose in my cabin, eh?" vociferated Captain Cuttle.

"How do you know it was I?" asked Jack.

"Look at the cap you gave him. It's got your name inside. You did it. No lies. To the masthead! Away with you, and stay there till you have my permission to come down, which won't be yet awhile."

Jack made his way to the mainmast, and put his foot in the shrouds,

"Captain Cuttle," he said.

"What now?" said the captain, turning round sharply.

"You'll send my dinner up," continued Jack.

The captain made a run at Jack, and would have sent him up the rigging by the help of his foot, quicker than he might have liked, had not Jack already taken the precaution to go up the shrouds and remove himself out of harm's way.

"Monkey meat is all you'll have," he said, looking up at Jack.

Jack took out his watch.

"How long am I to stay here?" he said. "It's a fine

airy situation, but it's possible to have too much of a good thing."

"You'll stop there until this time to-morrow, and that will teach you to play tricks upon me again. So no more of your palaver, my lad."

"By what authority do you act?" asked Jack.

"Say another word, my boy, and I'll put you in irons, by the living Jingo," cried the captain, who was beside himself with rage.

Jack slowly ascended the rigging and reached the top.

Jack looked down, and having a bit of wood in his pocket, threw it at Hunston and hit him on the nose.

Hunston looked round wonderingly, but could not discover where the missile came from.

From the top, Jack ascended to the cross-trees, and sat there for a time very contentedly, but the pangs of hunger began to assail him, and his watch told him that the midshipmen's mess was being served.

"I'll have a cut at the salt junk anyhow," he muttered.

With that he began to descend, and to the astonishment of his comrades, entered the cabin as they were just commencing dinner.

"Has he let you off?" exclaimed Wren.

"Not he. I've let myself off," replied Jack. "The air up there has made me so sharp-set that I could eat a shoal of whales."

"Cut in then," replied Wren. "It's your own look-out, and I'm not one to crab you."

Jack soon fell to and made an excellent dinner.

He chatted gaily, and recounted what he had done to the monkey, making them all laugh.

"You'd better get up again before the captain sees you," suggested Wren, who was not a bad-hearted fellow at all. "He is not a man to be trifled with, as you have already found out, I daresay; but he has already got his knife into you for what you have done, and you'd better keep his swivel eyes off you if you can."

"One more chunk," said Jack, eyeing the beef affectionately.

While he was finishing his dinner, Hunston and Maple went on deck.

"Here is an opportunity not to be lost," said Maple.

"How?" asked Hunston.

"Let me go and tell the captain where Harkaway is and what he's doing, and I shall get into his favour, and Jack will get into a row."

"Go ahead then," replied Hunston. "I've no love for him, and he's treated me none so well since we've been on board together, that I should care for him."

Maple went into the captain's cabin, and found him at dinner with Mr. Mole and Mr. Blader. With the latter he had made up the difference by apologizing for his hastiness, and the naturalist being of a forgiving disposition, as he had said, shook hands with him.

"What do you want, youngster?" asked Captain Cuttle.

"One of my former pupils," interposed Mr. Mole. "A very good boy. It is a pleasure to sail with so many old friends, more especially as Harkaway has let me alone."

"Please captain," said Maple, in his sneaking way; "I have come to inform you of a circumstance of which I think you ought not to be ignorant."

"Very good!" exclaimed Mr. Mole, rubbing his hands, "very good, indeed."

"Mutiny in the ship, eh?" asked the captain.

"Not so bad as that; but it's disobedience of orders," answered Maple.

"I'll tell you once for all, that I don't care for tale-bearers; but I'll listen to you," said the captain, in his blunt way.

"Harkaway has come down from aloft, to have his dinner, and he's at it now."

"Is he?" said the captain, grinding his teeth.

"I hope you'll remember it was I who told you, sir," said Maple, thinking he had made a favourable impression.

"Take that," cried the captain, jumping up from his chair, and dealing him a box on the ears. "That's all the thanks you'll get from me for telling tales."

Maple ran away, and the captain followed him on deck.

"Mr. Blader ran after him, saying—

"Do not be hasty, I beg, Captain Cuttle. Perhaps the poor lad Harkaway has been sufficiently punished for a harmless joke."

"Harmless! That's your opinion. Leave him to me, and mind your own business."

Mr. Blader fell back.

Calling a tall, stalwart seaman to his side, the captain exclaimed—

“Take Mr. Harkaway, the midshipman under punishment, who has disobeyed orders by coming down from the masthead, and who is now in the midshipmen’s berth, and lash him to the topmast-rigging. Be off and look sharp.”

The sailor, whose name was Davage, went on his errand, and met Jack coming up the hatchway.

“You’ve got to come along with me, sir,” he said.

“Where?” asked Jack.

“To be lashed to the rigging.”

“All right,” answered Jack, coolly. “It will save me the trouble of sitting on the cross-trees.”

Davage took a coil of rope, and, preceded by Jack, went up the rigging.

When they came to the topmast, he tied him up tightly so that it was impossible for him to extricate himself.

“Very sorry, sir,” he said. “But it’s the captain’s orders.”

“I’m all right; don’t flurry your fat,” replied Jack. “But Captain Cuttle may take his davy I’ll be even with him for this.”

“You’d have the ship’s company with you, sir,” said Davage.

The sailor descended to the deck, and Jack was left alone in his glory.

In the heavens the sun was shining brightly, and the wind whistled melodiously through the cordage.

For a time Jack did not mind it, but after an hour had elapsed, his position began to get painful.

“I suppose it’s my fault,” he said to himself. “But it is not pleasant. I’ve been deceived in old Cuttle. He’s a humbug. Crawcour was a lamb compared to him. I wish I hadn’t let the monkey loose. I wish I hadn’t gone to sea. What a fool I was!”

The day declined, and Jack’s position became every hour more and more irksome.

There did not seem any prospect of release.

“Perhaps Dick will come up to me,” he muttered, as he thought of Harvey.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CAPTAIN'S SECRET.

WEARILY passed the evening.

The pain which Jack had hitherto suffered increased to positive agony as the ropes with which he was lashed to the rigging chafed his limbs.

Had not Davage mercifully made the strain come round his body, and under the arms, his condition would have been worse.

To bodily pain were added hunger and thirst, the latter especially, for the salt beef he had eaten at dinner time made him long for a good draught of sweet water.

To his parched throat, even the salt sea appeared enticing, and he longed to be able to shake himself free from the galling cords, and plunge into the waves which leaped and danced at his feet.

There was a gleam of comfort when he remembered that it was Harvey's watch.

About twelve, as near as he could guess, for he could not look at his watch, he heard someone coming up the rigging.

It was Harvey.

"Thank you for coming to see me," said Jack, in a faint voice.

"I've come to do more, if you like to risk it," answered Harvey.

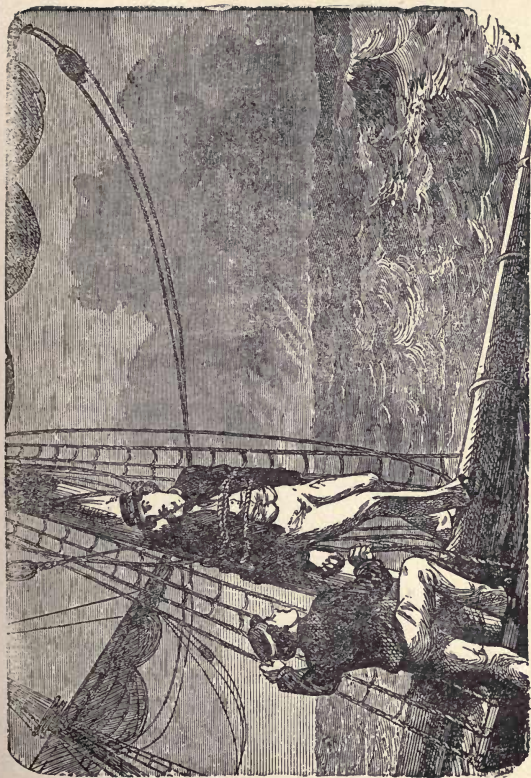
"What's that?"

"Cut you down. All the fellows in the ship say it's too bad to keep you tied up here the best part of the day and all night too. Are you not stiff?"

"Rather," replied Jack; "but I think I shall be able to get down. The circulation in my limbs is all right. Davage didn't lash my wrists and ankles."

"Cuttle turned in tight, I think, and won't come on deck till the morning. Thompson, the first mate, is on deck, and he told me if liked to go up and speak to you, he shouldn't see me."

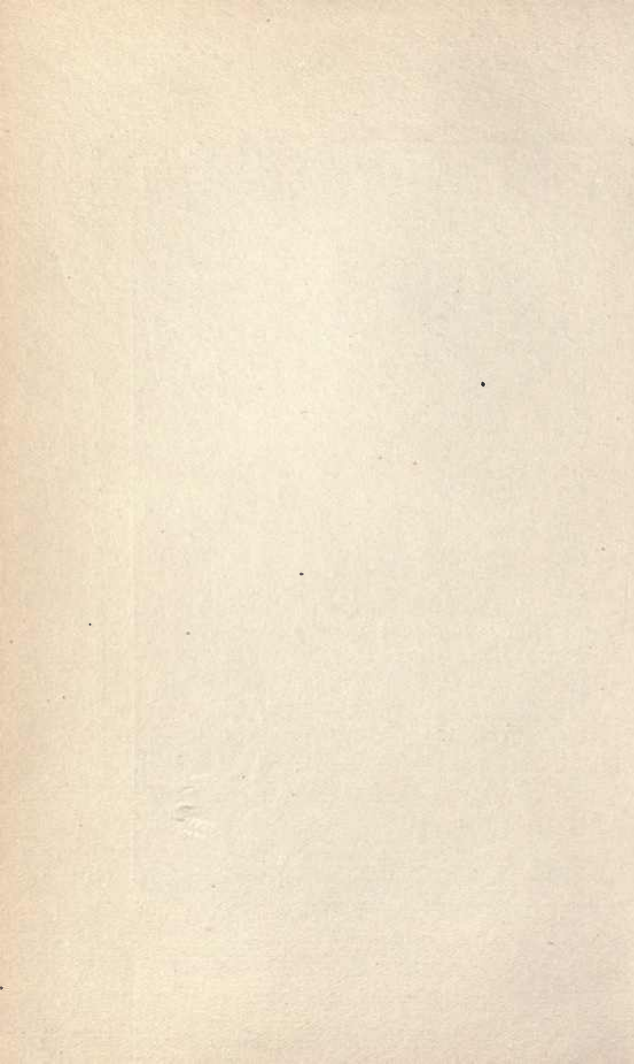
"Thompson's a brick," said Jack. "Under the circumstances, I'll come down, Dick, and chance it. I'm that



J. H.

"THANK YOU, FOR COMING TO SEE ME," SAID JACK.

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dry, I could dip my beak into a puddle of road water ; and my head aches fit to split."

"I should think it did ; you had a tidy sun on you for some time."

As he spoke, Harvey cut away the lashings, and threw them into the sea.

It was lucky he supported Jack with one arm, for the latter had overrated his strength, and it was some few minutes before he could recover himself sufficiently to trust himself off the trees.

At length he reached the deck, and crawled along in the shadow to the main hatch, and so reached the mid-shipmen's mess.

His first care was to quench his thirst.

Then he looked around him.

Wren, Sinclair, Hunston, and Maple were fast asleep, and only a faint light came in through the portholes.

Wren was tossing about in an uneasy, restless manner, as if indulging in the luxury of a private nightmare.

"What is he saying ?" Jack muttered, as he heard him talk in his sleep.

"He wouldn't masthead me," said Wren, speaking thickly and excitedly at intervals. "I'd call him Captain Scuttle, as I did once before."

"Captain Scuttle !" repeated Jack, listening intently. "There is something in this."

For a brief space Wren was silent.

"Didn't I see him with my own eyes bore holes in the bottom of the 'Polar Star ?' She was lost off Newfoundland. Foundered in a fog. Ha ! ha ! Crew saved in the boats, and reached St. John's. The Mercantile Marine Insurance Company wouldn't have paid the damage if they'd known what I know. Cuttle or Scuttle, he mustn't talk to me."

Jack drank in every word of this revelation, after which Wren was silent.

The sleeping boy had probably been contrasting his position with Jack's during his waking hours, and the result was a dwelling of the mind, upon what often occupied it, while asleep.

"That's the captain's secret, is it ?" Jack said to himself. "A pretty villain Captain Cuttle is. I see now why Wren isn't afraid of him. Wait a bit."

Jack turned in, "all standing," as he phrased it—thatis, with all his clothes on, and slept very well till morning.

His messmates were astonished to see him.

"I didn't know they'd let you run about loose again," said Wren.

"You don't know everything," replied Jack.

"How did you like it?" asked Sinclair.

"Oh, stunning; lovely sky and beautiful prospect."

Jack had scarcely finished his breakfast when he was sent for to the captain's cabin as he had expected.

Captain Cuttle had been on deck, and discovered that the prisoner was not in his proper position.

He made inquiries without any result, and sent for the offender.

He was alone when Jack entered, and glared at him fiercely.

"Is there going to be a fight between you and me, to see who is to conquer, my lad?" exclaimed he.

"Yes, Captain Scuttle," replied Jack.

"Captain WHAT?" roared the skipper.

"I beg your pardon," said Jack. "Being aloft so long has made me rather stupid. I meant Cuttle. It was gazing at the Polar Star that confused me."

The captain looked keenly at him, as if he would read his soul in its innermost depths.

For a moment he could not make out whether he was speaking by design or from accident, and Jack's perfectly cool and off-hand manner rendered his task all the more difficult.

"Aren't you afraid of me?" he asked, presently.

"No. I knew you wouldn't do anything more to me."

"Why not?"

"A little bird told me so," answered Jack.

"Wren. You mean Wren," exclaimed the captain, losing his presence of mind. "You've been talking to Wren."

"He was only spinning me a yarn, sir," replied Jack, "about being wrecked off Newfoundland. The ship foundered in a convenient spot, went down in a fog, which fogged everybody, even the Mercantile Marine Insurance."

Captain Cuttle went up to Jack, and put his hand on his shoulder, grasping it till he hurt the flesh.

He was very white now, and he spoke with an intensity of feeling that showed he was in earnest.

"Keep your tongue between your teeth, lad," he exclaimed, "if you want to save your life."

"My life!" repeated Jack, who was rather alarmed at the skipper's tone and manner.

"Aye, your life. Never dare to talk to me again as you have to-day. There was one about your own age—but no matter. Wren had best look to it. The one I was about to speak of *fell overboard during the night!*"

Jack's flesh crept with horror.

"Go. I have said enough for a sensible lad like you. Don't provoke me too far!" exclaimed the captain.

Jack moved towards the door.

"I suppose, sir, I needn't go star-gazing any more?" he said.

The captain flung a boot at him, and he retired precipitately.

Jack had gained his point, but at what a cost!

He had incurred the hostility and suspicion of the captain, who was a violent and vindictive man.

He did not stick at trifles, or he would not have fired at Mr. Blader as he did, when Slocum so providentially spoilt his aim at the cost of a broken head.

The horribly mysterious hint which the captain had thrown out ran in Jack's mind.

It was easy enough for a strong and determined man to throw a boy overboard on a dark night.

So he resolved not to irritate the captain beyond the latter's power of endurance.

How he kept his resolution, we shall see presently.

He had conquered in the first fight, and was so far master of the situation.

CHAPTER VII.

WREN DISAPPEARS.

AFTER the interview that Jack had with the captain, he began to grow afraid of him.

Captain Cuttle was not the amiable person he had ap-

peared to be, and his true character was showing itself day by day.

Though Jack appeared to have got the best of it, the captain was evidently not a man to forget.

His mysterious hint about the midshipman who fell overboard because he dared to talk about what he knew, alarmed Jack.

"It won't do, Dick, to play with our captain," he said.

"Why?" asked Harvey.

"Because he wouldn't mind murdering a fellow."

Harvey laughed.

"Draw it mild, Jack," he said. "We are living in a civilised age, and with all the men on board he would scarcely like to risk getting his neck in a noose."

"Suppose I fell overboard."

"That would be your fault."

"Ah, but suppose I was pushed over on a dark night, when no one was looking, and only the wind heard my cries for help."

"What do you mean?" asked Harvey, curiously.

"I scarcely know myself. But I'll tell you what I have learnt. When Wren was asleep the other night, he talked wildly about our captain scuttling the 'Polar Star,' to get the insurance money. Scuttling means boring holes in her bottom, so that she may sink. Wren sailed in the 'Polar Star,' and I hinted to Captain Cuttle something about it."

"You did!"

"Yes, and that is why I was let off. But at the same time, the captain told me that one of his midshipmen 'fell overboard,' because he couldn't keep his tongue between his teeth. I believe it will be Wren's turn next, because Captain Cuttle thinks he has been chatting to me. I shall be very careful what I say this voyage, and when we get to Canton I shall cut and run, and hide till the 'Fairy' has started homewards, and then ship in some other vessel. I'm not going to risk the return voyage with such a skipper, if, please God, I last out this journey."

"Here is Wren," said Harvey. "He don't look as if he funk'd much."

"Well, my young true blue!" said Wren, approaching Jack. "You got out of your little scrape better than I

expected. Old Cuttle doesn't generally let fellows off; I couldn't have done it better myself."

"You've got a hold over him," said Jack.

"So I said; but neither you nor anyone else knows what that is, nor are you likely to."

"Come here," said Jack.

Wren approached, and Jack whispered in his ear—

"It's something about the 'Polar Star,' isn't it, and Captain Scuttle?"

"How did you know that?" asked Wren, much astonished.

"Captain told me. We're like brothers," replied Jack.

"By the way, who was the midshipman who fell overboard?"

Wren turned deadly pale.

"Did he tell you that, too?" he said.

"If he hadn't how should I know it all?" answered Jack. "You didn't, did you?"

"It would have been as much as my life is worth to have done so," replied Wren. "If Cuttle let on about what only he and I knew, since Damer's death, he must be going off his nut."

"He was tight," Jack said; "and I caught him in the humour. How did Damer die?"

"Damer was the only friend I had on earth, and he was drowned one night in a gale of wind. What's the use of your asking me a lot of questions, when you know all about it?"

"Foul play?"

"Of course. But I won't be pumped; take my advice, and keep your mouth shut, or else you'll follow Damer," said Wren.

"Perhaps you'll go first," replied Jack.

"Not I," said Wren; "I don't go and clack about. I'm too wide awake for that, so sheer off, my hearty, and keep the chain up, or else——"

He broke off abruptly, and pointed to the sea with a significant air.

"Food for fishes, eh?" said Jack, coolly.

"And no mistake," replied Wren, as he slouched off with his hands in his pockets.

"A lively prospect," Jack remarked to Harvey.

"For goodness, sake, Jack, don't be rash; take his

advice and shut up," Harvey replied. "There is danger, I can see it now. Captain Cuttle——"

"Scuttle, you mean?"

"No, I don't. I wouldn't whisper such a word, lest he might hear it, and wipe me out as—as he did Damer."

Harvey sank his voice to a low tone as he uttered the last words, and looked around him cautiously.

There was no one near.

"I've concluded one thing," Jack said, "and that is, I'd better subside for the present, though I should like to wake old Mole up."

"You'll have plenty of opportunities," replied Harvey.

Jack was prudent enough not to offend Captain Cuttle in any way.

He remarked that he treated Wren with marked coldness, and although Wren could not guess the reason, Jack knew it well enough.

The captain thought Wren had betrayed his secret, and distrusted him accordingly.

The ship made a good voyage as far as the Cape, when they encountered stormy weather.

Jack was in his bunk one night, when the weather was more than usually boisterous, and the noise made by the gale that was raging woke him up.

It was Wren's watch.

He could hear the steady pacing of his footsteps on deck, every now and then, as he passed overhead.

Suddenly he heard other footsteps, and he fancied there was the sound of a scuffle, and then a despairing shriek came up from the sea.

Jack sprang up and looked out of a porthole.

Was he dreaming, or did he for a moment see a wan, white, hopeless face rise to the surface, and then fall rapidly astern?

"I could swear that was Wren's face," Jack said to himself.

He would have gone on deck and cried "Man overboard!" but he was afraid to do so. He might be mistaken. If he raised a false alarm he would be bullied on all hands, and he knew enough of seafaring to be sure that no boat could live in such a storm.

If, indeed, Wren was overboard, he was lost without the possibility of hope.

Trembling in every limb Jack turned over and tried to go to sleep, without avail.

He could not get the horrid sight out of his eyes.

The apparition, if apparition it was, haunted him.

Towards morning he fell into an uneasy slumber, but did not say anything to his messmates, being too much afraid of the captain to do so.

At breakfast time Wren was missing from the mess, and on inquiries being made, nothing could be heard of him.

The man at the wheel had seen him at midnight, but not afterwards.

As the sea was running heavily at the time, and the decks were repeatedly washed by huge waves, it was supposed he had been swept overboard. Jack had his suspicions to the contrary.

So had Harvey.

And looking mournfully at one another, they asked whose turn it would be next.

Jack had not the remotest doubt that Wren had been thrown overboard by the captain in the storm.

He was most circumspect in his conduct afterwards for fear of arousing the resentment of Captain Cuttle, which had been slumbering for some time.

"Poor Wren," said Jack to Harvey, "if I had not spoken, he would have been alive still."

"You didn't mean anything," replied Harvey.

"God knows I didn't," said Jack; "I had no particular cause to like the fellow, but I did not think he would come to an end like this."

The captain did not seem much concerned at what had happened.

He spoke a few words to his midshipmen, and concluded by saying, as he looked steadily at Jack, "You must all of you be careful. The best sailors are liable to accidents, and what has unfortunately occurred to poor Wren might be the fate of any of you."

The ship, however, went on her way, and, as Jack was very civil and well behaved, and took care when on deck at night to look about him, to prevent a surprise, he was alive and well, when the ship, leaving the Indian Ocean, passed through the straits of Malacca, on her way to the China Seas.

The old seaman, Slocum, who had been knocked down by the captain for stating his ideas of duty, had taken a great fancy to Jack, and taught him many things he would not otherwise have learnt.

The first mate also gave him lessons in navigation, and Mr. Mole induced him to read with him in his leisure hours.

So it will be seen that Jack, through fear of his life, which he thought the captain would not hesitate to take if he offended him, was making very fair progress, and behaving very well.

After Wren's loss, Sinclair, Jack and Harvey became friends, and Hunston and Maple were left to themselves.

Everyone was glad at reaching the Eastern Archipelago, for it was an indication that their voyage was drawing to a close.

Hunston who was profoundly ignorant on almost all points, was holding an argument with Sinclair one morning at mess about the position of Singapore, at which place the ship was to touch.

"I tell you," said Hunston, "that Singapore is one of our settlements in the West Indies."

Sinclair laughed.

"I'll refer it to Harkaway," said Sinclair, who came down in his shirt-sleeves to have his breakfast, for the heat was fearful.

"You've made two mistakes in one sentence," replied Jack, "for Singapore is a free state, and can't be called one of our settlements, exactly; and we are in the East, not the West Indies."

"It doesn't matter," exclaimed Hunston, annoyed; "I thank goodness I don't know much about these things."

"Then you thank goodness for your ignorance," said Jack laughing.

"Suppose I do; what then?"

"Oh, nothing much; only you've a great deal to be thankful for," Jack retorted, with a gravity that made the others laugh still louder.

Hunston held his tongue, for he was no match for Jack when the latter began to chaff him.

At Singapore some cargo was delivered, and Mr. Blader, the naturalist, went on shore to see if he could purchase anything for his collection.

He came back just before the vessel started again, with a large box, which he had placed in his cabin.

There were holes in the top, as if it was intended to give air to some living thing.

Jack saw it come on board and his curiosity was strongly excited.

"Dick, what's in that box of old Blader, do you think?" he asked, as the anchor was being weighed.

"Can't guess. A hippopotamus perhaps," replied Harvey.

"Hippopotamus my eye," exclaimed Jack. "Will you help me to find out?"

"Like a bird."

"When?"

"After the 'uproar is over' my pippin," said Harvey, meaning when they were fairly under weigh.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT WAS IN THE BOX.

As soon as they could get away from their duties, Jack and Harvey stole down stairs into the passengers' cabin. It was deserted.

By applying his eye to one of the holes in the box, Jack got a view of what was inside.

He sprang up with a cry.

"What is it?" asked Harvey.

"My eye!" exclaimed Jack; "I never saw such a thing in my life. It's a snake as thick round as a man's thigh."

"Perhaps it's stuffed."

"You're stuffed," said Jack derisively. "What are the holes for if it isn't alive?"

"What does old Blader want with a thing like that on board? I wonder the captain allows it."

"The skipper, I expect, doesn't know anything about it. Suppose we let it out. Won't there be a dust up!"

"Oh, Jack!" said Harvey, lost in admiration of this brilliant idea.

The snake was a python of the largest size.

Fully fifteen feet long, and wide in proportion. It had been presented to the naturalist by a gentleman who had lately returned from a long journey to Cambodia, and it had been caught while gorged by the natives of Bankok.

Mr. Blader intended to drown it, by suspending the box in the sea by ropes, and then to put it in alcohol to preserve it; but as the ship sailed early, he had not had time yet to put his plan in execution.

The lid was fastened securely with a padlock, though it was easy to undo it by taking out one of the staples.

This Jack proceeded to do.

"I'll go and tell Mole," said Jack, "that someone wants to see him in the cabin. Won't it be a lark?"

"Suppose the beast eats him," suggested Harvey.

"He's a fool if he does, for Mole's so tough he's sure to disagree with him."

"It'll be all up with Mole's tea-garden."

"Mind he doesn't collar you, Dick," said Jack, "the staple will be out directly."

"I say, don't funk a fellow into fits," replied Harvey, getting further off. "I've read of those big snakes—pythons they call them—and they're not poisonous. Their dodge is to fix their fangs in your leg, and then twist their coils round you, which they do as quickly as the lash of a whip twines round a post. Your bones crack, and it's all U P with you in a half-a-jiffey."

"There isn't much of you, Dick," said Jack, pausing a moment in wrenching out the staple with his pocket knife; "suppose you let him have you. It'll be a nice whet to his appetite, like half-a-dozen of oysters before dinner."

"Thank you," answered Harvey, "you're very kind. Show me the way first."

"Next week," said Jack, grinning.

"Won't you?"

"Not much," replied Jack; "I'm not tired of my life yet. His snakeship doesn't gobble me up if I know it."

"What'll the captain say?"

"I'll chance that."

Suddenly the staple came out with a run, and Jack, who was pulling hard at it rolled over on his back.

Harvey made for the door, like a startled hare.

The snake, astonished at his unexpected freedom,

raised his ugly head and glared savagely at Jack, who picked himself up and retreated to a safe distance.

"Morning, governor," he said, nodding his head. "How do you find yourself?"

The python's only reply to this was to uncoil himself and glide out of the box on to the floor.

Jack was astonished at his prodigious size; he did not think he was half so big or formidable, and was rather sorry he'd let him out.

"He's a nice sort of customer to meet on a dark night," he muttered.

Retreating to the deck, whither Harvey had retired before him, he looked round for his friend and found him perched upon the monkey-rail, leaning his back against the mizzen-rigging.

Mr. Mole was on deck, attired in a Chinese bagu, or loose blouse, a pair of canvas shoes and a large sun hat, which he had bought at Singapore, as being seasonable.

"Well, Jack," exclaimed Mr. Mole, "now you can sing 'I'm afloat' once more."

"I know that; I could sing the tune the old cow died on if I wanted to," replied Jack. "I'm not in a singing humour. But I shouldn't mind reading one of the Odes, if you've a Horace handy, sir."

Jack knew he hadn't, and would have to go down into the cabin for one.

"Certainly, my boy. I am always ready to instruct the mind of youth. Ingenuous youth, as we used to say at my esteemed friend, Mr. Crawcour's."

"Rather a change, sir, in going to China, and larruping niggers," said Jack.

"I shall behave humanely to my labourers. Larruping, as you term it, is not a part of my programme."

"Chain them up, sir," Jack replied, thinking of the treatment he once received at Mr. Crawcour's. Mr. Mole smiled, and said he would go for the Horace.

Harvey came down and exclaimed, "I see Mole's gone."

"Hold your row. He'll come up quicker than he went if the snake doesn't cop him," rejoined Jack.

The two boys, breathless with impatience, awaited the result of Mr. Mole's journey.

Presently there was a noise as of some one scampering

up the companion, and Mr. Mole reached the top, uttering dismal cries.

"Oh! Lord help me! Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord! He made a snap at my canvas shoe! It's awful," exclaimed the schoolmaster.

Captain Cuttle and Mr. Blader were walking together, and they came to Mr. Mole to inquire the cause of his fright.

"What's the shindy?" asked the captain, in his blunt way; "anyone would think you'd seen Old Nick."

"Worse, sir; worse, a thousand times," answered Mr. Mole.

"What's worse? the ghost of your grandmother?"

Mr. Mole's knees shook and knocked together, while he was obliged to lean upon the naturalist for support.

"There's a serpent in the cabin," he muttered, "as big as a horse, and as wide round as a young donkey. Oh, Lord! It made a dive at my canvas shoe, as if it was going to begin to eat me, legs first."

"A serpent on board my ship? I never heard of such a thing. That's a sort of merchandise I didn't bargain for," said Captain Cuttle. "You must be dreaming. It's the brandy-and-water you've had. Delirium tremens often makes men feel snakes in their boots, and you said he was at your canvas shoe."

"Why, it must be my **python**," remarked Mr. Blader, alarmed.

"Your python!" said the captain, "are you going to see snakes, too?"

"It's a fact. I had an enormous snake given me yesterday," answered the naturalist, "and brought him on board, intending to preserve him as a unique specimen."

"I wish you'd have told me," Captain Cuttle said, with a look of annoyance. "These reptiles are not easy to kill."

"How he got loose puzzles me, but I suppose his huge strength enabled him to force the staple. It is really very thoughtless of me, and I am very sorry Mr. Mole should have been so much alarmed."

Dick, Harvey and Jack overheard this conversation with much glee.

"It was touch and go with Mole," whispered Harvey.

"Yes—and blow me tight," replied Jack, in the same tone, "if they won't have all their work cut out for them to kill him."

The captain reflected for a moment, and came to the conclusion that something ought to be done to get rid of the snake.

"It won't do to let the critter have the run of the ship," he said. "Here, you Harkaway, go to the carpenter, and get a hatchet."

"Right, sir," said Jack, running off for that purpose.

"I believe," remarked Mr. Blader, "that you may fire at a snake, and put a ball in his body without doing him much harm. What is necessary is to break his back, or cut him in half."

"Exactly—and that's what you'd better do," said Captain Cuttle.

"I!" cried the naturalist, aghast.

"Yes—the boy will be here with a hatchet for you directly. It's your snake, you were responsible for his coming on board, and you've got to kill him."

"Suppose I decline the honour," observed Mr. Blader, who did not seem to like the task assigned him at all.

Jack now arrived with the axe, and said, as he handed it to Mr. Mole—

"Go in and win, sir. St. George and the Dragon for ever. You can do it, sir."

"My dear young friend, I will have nothing to do with reptiles," answered Mr. Mole, declining to take the axe.

"Rather than encounter the dreadful eyes of that awful monster again, I would be—a—be keelhauled."

"It won't harm you, sir. He's as tame as a kitten," continued Jack.

"Look here, my lad," exclaimed the captain with a malicious look. "You're very fast in giving other people advice. If the thing is to be done as easily as you say, why don't you do it?"

"I shouldn't mind," replied Jack, speaking almost before he thought of the effect of his words.

"That's right—take the axe and go down into the cabin—kill that snake, and then we shall know what sort of stuff you're made of."

Jack hesitated and hung back.

The terrible risk he would run in an encounter of this

kind, flashed across his mind, and he was more than half inclined to back out of it.

The mocking laughter of the captain rang in his ear.

"Ha! ha! You're all smoke and no fire," he cried, in derision. "Go about your business, my lad, and another time don't try and get credit for that courage which you do not possess."

"I didn't say I wouldn't do it," replied Jack, growing pale. "Give me the axe, sir. I'll have a shy at him, if he were as big as the mainmast. If he should swallow me, I suppose you'll come down and rip him up to let me out."

The captain laughed, and handed Jack the axe, which he took with a hand that trembled a little.

Removing his jacket, he stood in his shirt-sleeves, which he tucked up, and shaking hands with Harvey, said, in a low tone—

"Good-bye, Dick. It's odds on the worm chawing me up. I wonder how it will feel inside."

Harvey could not help wondering at the spirits his friend possessed at such a moment, but though Jack indulged in chaff, he was in reality in a dreadful fright.

However, the captain, who was his enemy, had dared him to the encounter, and he resolved to do the best he could.

The "worm," as he playfully called the python, was no contemptible antagonist for a boy of his age, and the odds were against him as he had truly said.

Mr. Blader and Mr. Mole both remonstrated with the captain, about letting Jack embark in such an enterprise.

"Isn't it cowardly to let a boy do such a thing with the almost certainty of being killed," said Mr. Blader, "when there are men about?"

"You're welcome to go and do it yourself as I said before," said the captain. "One thing I know, and that is, I shan't."

This retort compelled Mr. Blader to be silent.

"If it wasn't for my tea-garden and my prospects, and a certain rheumatic affection in my legs, which has just come on," said Mr. Mole, "I would go and despatch the serpent myself."

Captain Cuttle turned contemptuously from them.

"Ready, sir," said Jack, preparing to descend the ladder.

"Wish you luck, lad," replied the captain, who could not withhold his admiration of Jack's courage.

The men, learning what was going to take place, all crowded aft, and some of them ventured so far as to go down the companion, and look in at the cabin door.

It was a moment of unparalleled anxiety and expectation.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STORM.

WHEN Jack got into the cabin the python was gliding about the carpet and seemed to have the appearance of being astonished at finding himself where he was.

Directly he saw Jack he recognised an enemy, and coiled himself up, raising his head high out of the midst of his huge coil.

His red jaws were wide open, and his eyes shone like live coals.

For an instant Jack felt his blood freeze in his veins, and it is not to be wondered at, considering that he had undertaken a task at which men presumably brave, held back, and were afraid.

As a fact, the bravest men are always ready to own to a sensation of fear. It is their will that carries them through.

The snake realised, as it were, instinctively, that one of the two must die on that spot.

Jack approached him, and the python darted at his foot, hoping to fasten his fangs in his boot. Now Jack could understand what Mr. Mole had meant by saying that it made a dive at his canvas shoe.

"Good-morning !" said Jack, under his breath, as he started back with the agility of a chamois-hunter, "you didn't do it that time, my beauty ; and you are a beauty, after a fashion. I hope you'll have a pain in your stomach if you swallow me, for then I shall know what's going on outside."

Again the snake darted at him and again he stepped back.

Noticing that it was necessary for the creature to re-

coil after each spring Jack ran in, just as he had sprung, and dealt him a blow with the axe.

Instead of falling across the snake and breaking its back, it only cut into the side, making a deep incision, from which the dark blood welled up.

The springing and dodging continued with more rapidity than before, and Jack jumped up and down with the activity of a harlequin, and the perspiration rolled down him.

"It's hot work," he thought, "I've heard of a bear dancing on hot plates, but I doubt if it's worse than this. By Jove! that was a shave. Look out, old fellow. Now I've got you."

The python's jaws came within an inch of his foot, but Jack perceived his advantage. It was now or never, and he flung himself upon the snake, dealing him a cut about fifteen inches behind his head, which severed it from the body, except about an inch on the other side.

As he coiled up this part fell over, and in his dying agony he fastened his teeth in his own coils.

"That's the finisher," Jack cried in triumph as he dealt him another blow nearer the head, which rolled on the floor.

Drawing his knife, he stuck it into the brain, and armed with the ghastly trophy, ran out of the cabin.

The men made way for him, and a hearty cheer broke out. Such a cheer as only Englishmen, in their admiration of manly courage, can give.

Captain Cuttle patted him on the back, and said—"You're a fine fellow, my boy, and an honour to the ship's company."

Jack tried to speak, but he could not.

The reaction came, and sitting down on a bale of goods, he burst into tears, letting the head fall at his feet.

No one but himself knew what he had suffered in the few minutes that were occupied in his fight with the python.

He seemed to have lived a lifetime.

Some men were set to work to swab up the blood, and throw the loathsome reptile's body overboard.

The captain took Jack into his own cabin and gave him some cordial out of a case bottle.

"Thank you, sir," said Jack as he drank the dram.

"You're a lad after my own heart," said Captain Cuttle filling the glass a second time, and adding—"Drink it up. It won't hurt you. It will steady your nerves after what you've gone through. You and I must be friends, so don't make any more allusions to what that foolish and unfortunate fellow Wren told you. I have watched you narrowly lately, and I see you can keep your tongue quiet. I'm not the man to stand falsehoods being spread about me, and if you are discreet, we shall pull together. If not—well, I need not say any more to a boy of your intelligence."

He gave Jack his hand, and the lad shuddered as he took it, for he felt sure that Captain Cuttle knew more about Wren's death than he chose to say.

However, he made a virtue of necessity, and disguising his real feelings, left the cabin high in his captain's favour.

This adventure made Jack quite a hero. He had all along been a favourite with the crew; now they looked up to him with admiring eyes as well as looks of affection.

This is always the reward paid by men to true courage.

Among those who congratulated him was Harvey.

"I wouldn't have done it," said Harvey, "if the owner had given me the ship and its cargo. How did you feel while you were about it?"

"Oh, jolly enough," replied Jack, "when I saw what the beggar's tactics were, I knew I was bound to have him."

"Everybody admired your pluck."

"Perhaps we shall have worse than that to go through before we get home," replied Jack, who did not like being praised.

He spoke at random, but there was more truth in the casual remark, as they were soon to find out, than either he or Harvey imagined.

For many a night afterwards Jack woke up in his sleep with a start, fancying he saw a snake coiling round him.

The "Fairy" went on her course up the China Sea, and at last encountered very rough weather.

A storm arose and came upon her suddenly.

She rolled about for some hours, and one of her masts went overboard—a terrific sea swept her deck, carrying over the side two seamen, and disabling her rudder, and washing away the binnacle. It was night.

With all Captain Cuttle's faults, and they were not a few, as we have seen, he was a good sailor.

The storms, in those latitudes are, however, so sudden and so fierce, that even a thorough seaman cannot at all times prevent disasters.

About midnight a leak was reported.

The "Fairy" was drifting about on the waves, tossed hither and thither—rudderless and helpless !

Captain Cuttle was out of his reckoning.

By a reference to the chart he imagined that at the time the storm came on they were in about 4 deg. N. latitude, by 109 deg. W. longitude.

This would place them between two groups of islands in the Indian Archipelago.

These were the Anambas and the Natuna isles.

The latter islands were about 120 geographical miles from Sarawak, in Borneo, and about 200 miles from Singapore.

Reports stated that the natives of these islands were wild and savage.

The sailors spun yarns about head hunters or cannibals, and the boys listened with rapt attention.

It was probable that the ship would be wrecked, or indeed, that she might founder and go down in mid-ocean.

When the captain realized the desperate condition of his vessel, he strained every nerve to save her.

Relays of hands were kept all night at the pumps, and in the morning the dismasted ship rode, water-logged, the sport of the wind, which blew steadily towards the Natunas.

Jack and Harvey worked like slaves.

The only skulkers were Hunston and Maple, who, thoroughly cowed and frightened, did not dare to speak a word.

Captain Cuttle, however, made them take their turn at the pumps, and saw that they did their fair share of work.

The approach of morning was a relief, for the storm had subsided somewhat.

Still the tempest had done damage which was irreparable.

A complete wreck—the once buoyant and beautiful ship "Fairy" was at the mercy of the wind and waves.

"Here's a pretty kettle of fish," said Jack to Harvey, as he went below to snatch a morsel of food, after being at work all night.

"What will become of us?" asked Harvey, dolefully.

"If we escape being food for fishes we shall make prime joints for the cannibals. There will be hot boiled Harvey, and cold roast Hunston, while jugged Maple will grace the festive board of the chief of the savages," answered Jack.

"I wish," said Hunston, "that if you must joke at such a time as this, you wouldn't do it at my expense."

"Why not, old cock?" asked Jack, dipping a weevilly biscuit in his tea.

"I don't like it," answered Hunston.

"Oh, if that's all, you'd better do the other thing."

"What's that?"

"Lump it," answered Jack, carelessly adding to Maple, "Have a weevil?"

Maple shook his head, and Jack threw the little insect—which often enough will creep into ship's biscuits—in his eye.

"Oh!" said Maple, "you must be a beast to throw a weevil into a man's eye."

"Call yourself a man! That's what you never were, and never will be," said Jack. "Wait till we land among the savages; you shall be my chief slave."

"Yours!" said Maple. "Perhaps you'll be one yourself."

"No, I shan't. I shall make love to the king's daughter."

"Suppose she likes me best," said Maple, extracting the weevil from his eye, and blinking over it like an old owl in an ivy bush.

"What!" said Jack, derisively, "a woman like you. That's coming it too strong. I tell you I shall marry the king's daughter, and you shall be my chief slave, while, I'll have Hunston artistically tattooed in various parts of his ugly body every morning before breakfast, for my amusement."

A dark form appeared in the doorway.

It was Captain Cuttle.

"No joking if you please, my lads," he said; "it's past a joke now. The water's gaining on us. Our only

chance, as we can't stop the leak, is to drift to shore. Who'll go aloft and keep a look-out for the land?"

"I will, sir," replied Jack.

The captain gave him a telescope, and he went aloft with alacrity, and taking his bearings, kept a sharp look-out.

These words, the first gloomy ones that the captain had given utterance to, struck a chill to all.

In a few hours their position had become desperate.

CHAPTER X.

LAND AHEAD.

AT the masthead, Jack amused himself with whistling the tune of the "King of the Cannibal Islands."

He rather liked the idea of being wrecked. There was novelty in it, and it would be something to talk about when he reached home again, if ever he did.

Still he was as anxious as any of the ship's company to sight land, and strained his eyes, with the aid of the glass, to distinguish the slightest speck.

Hours passed and he saw nothing.

Another night like that of the last would settle the fate of the "Fairy."

Already the crew were worn out with the fatigue of pumping, and want of sleep.

To set them an example, Captain Cuttle had himself taken a turn with the men and contributed his share to their united exertions.

It was weary work for Jack to look out hour after hour upon that dreary expanse of water.

On all sides of him was the pathless sea, stretching as far as the eye could reach, like a vast prairie, undulating and objectless.

Presently he saw a speck, which turned out to be a bird, which he regarded to be a good sign, and a herald of the approach of land.

When Noah sent the dove out of the ark and it returned, having no place to set its foot, he knew that no land was near.

Jack pulled a biscuit out of his pocket and munched it, wondering what little Emily would say if she saw him in his present position.

All at once he beheld something through the glass that looked like a dark cloud.

In time it grew more distinct, and he clearly defined a ridge of rocks.

Joyfully he sang out "Land ahead!" and the cry was taken up by all, who saw in the announcement a gleam of hope.

Captain Cuttle and the first mate, Mr. Thompson, immediately reconnoitred through their glasses, and their practised eyes confirmed Jack's declaration.

They conferred together.

"I fear there is no chance of saving the ship," said Captain Cuttle.

"I can see none, sir," replied the mate. "She is hopelessly waterlogged, and we can't expect to keep her afloat any length of time, pump as hard as we may. What shore, sir, do you reckon we are nearing?"

"Some of the islands west of Sarawak. I don't believe they are named on the map. There is a group called the Natunas; I should think we are nearing one of them," answered the captain.

"It's a bad job; but after all our lives are the first care. We have done our duty to the owner. Some would have abandoned the ship this morning and taken to the boats."

"We may save some of the cargo, if we run upon a reef."

"I doubt it, sir. If we strike we shall go to pieces, and it will be the devil take the hindmost," replied Thompson.

"How is the glass?"

"Rising, sir."

"More wind, eh?"

"I can feel it coming," answered the mate.

Captain Cuttle's face already clouded with anxiety, assumed a deeper hue still of dark care.

"Well," he said; "keep the hands at it. We are in the hands of Heaven. If the worst comes to the worst, we must take to the boats, that's all about it. To stay on board, and be driven on a leebound shore if the wind rises again will be worse than madness."

"Sheer suicide, sir," said Thompson.

The effect of the storm upon Mr. Mole was very marked. He made friends with the steward and procured more than one bottle of brandy, which he drank to keep his spirits up.

With an unsteady gait he entered the midshipmen's mess.

"My dear boys," he said, "this is a time of peril, and I trust that you are all prepared to do your duty—for what says the song upon this point, my dear boys? It says—bother me if I know what it does say. That's funny, isn't it?"

And Mr. Mole sat down on a locker, and began to laugh.

"I say, Jack," whispered Harvey, "Mole's a little bit on."

"On!" replied Jack; "I should say he was a good bit gone—half-seas over."

"We can't offer you a glass of grog, sir, for we've had none served out to our mess to-day," continued Harvey aloud.

"Grog, my dear boys, what is grog?" asked Mr. Mole, with a vacant stare.

"Generally rum and water on board ship," replied Jack. "I like it two parts rum and one water—none of your three water grog for me."

"I was about to observe, Harkaway, when you interrupted me with your usual impulsiveness, that grog is a vanity in which I never indulge; a glass of sherry and a biscuit satisfy my moderate desires. What says the song about biscuits?"

"I really don't know, sir," replied Jack.

"No more do I; fac' is my mem'ry is not so perfect as I could wish. Time was when I had a flute and could calm the savage breast with melody."

"I've got a concertina," said Harvey.

"Keep it," answered Mr. Mole, waving his hand with dignity. "At such a time as this concertinas are sinful. We are on the eve of a shipwreck—savages loom in the distance—all hands are pumping. I myself would have taken a turn at the pumps, if—if—the rheumatism in my lower limbs had not suddenly attacked me."

"What says the song to rheumatism, sir?" asked Jack.

"My dear boy, I am unaware that any song has been written upon so dismal a subject. If, however, I am mistaken, I shall be glad to sit corrected," said Mr. Mole. "Consider, however, the perils we have gone through, how sublimely the waves rolled, and——"

"How beautifully they smashed the rudder and swept away the binnacle," put in Jack.

Mr. Mole smiled, and took from his pocket a big bottle, which he raised to his lips. It was labelled "brandy."

"Fair dues, sir," replied Jack.

"What do you mean by that phrase? It is foreign to my comprehension," replied Mr. Mole.

"Give us a drink, that's all, sir. I've been on the look-out, and want a drop of something."

"Take it; take it all. It's nothing but vanity," answered Mr. Mole, handing him the bottle. "Had it not been at the urgent solicitation of the steward, who is a good and likewise a humane man, I should not have provided myself with this cordial. Take, it, Harkaway, but—and this I must impress upon you—drink not too deep; remember that your humble servant, Isaac Mole, has spirits to keep up as well as you, and this is a trying time."

"So it is, sir," said Jack, taking a pull and handing the bottle to Harvey, with, "Take a swig, Dick?"

"Don't mind if I do," replied Harvey adding, as he looked at Mr. Mole, "here's luck, sir."

"Luck, my dear boy! What is luck?—what says the song to luck?" answered Mr. Mole. "Here, hand back that bottle, I see the form of Hunston in the doorway, and truly he is an imbibor; a bibber as the Scripture hath it, a bibber of wine, and, truth to tell, anything else he can lay his hands on. I demand back my bottle. Thank you; truly the flesh is weak."

A long gurgle followed this remark, and Mr. Mole stretched himself at full length on the locker.

The bottle presently fell from his hand empty, and the worthy possessor of a tea-garden, in China, left him by the death of his uncle, snored.

Hunston only put his head in at the cabin door.

"Been at it again? Sorry for his tea-garden he speaks of," he exclaimed, pointing to Mr. Mole.

"If you want to know, you can ask him," said Jack.

"All right. I only came to tell you that the position of the ship is considered so desperate that orders have been given to man the boats."

"Go on," said Jack, "you're chaffing."

"Perhaps I am, and perhaps I'm not," answered Hunston.

"Well, it isn't a thing to chaff about."

"Did I say it was?"

Maple was just behind Hunston, and he said in a whisper—

"What do you want to tell them anything about it for?"

"They'd be drowned if——"

"Would that be any loss? didn't he cheek you just now as he always does?" interrupted Maple, who was of the same vindictive and sneaking disposition as when he was at Mr. Crawcour's.

"I don't care twopence for either of them," replied Hunston, "you know that as well as I do."

"Let them alone then."

Jack began to think that there might be something in what Hunston had said.

"Look here, old man, if I'm wanted on deck," he cried, "I'll come, but I haven't had a wink of sleep all night. I've been turn on and turn off hard at the pumps for twelve hours, and I'm very tired. I want to have a pitch somewhere for an hour or two."

"Have it then," said Hunston.

"No. Were you in earnest or not about the boats being manned?"

Hunston hesitated.

"Say No," whispered Maple, "and if they stop here, they'll be left on board. You know Captain Cuttle told us to go and get all hands up from below. Do as I tell you. What do you care for Harkaway? He has no power over you, has he?"

"Not he," replied Hunston, adding in a louder tone, "it was only my humbug. The ship's right enough."

"Is it!" said Jack; "then don't you joke like that again, or I'll lick you with a rope's end, Mr. Hunston; I don't like such chaff. We may all be in Heaven in a few hours' time, for what you know."

"You won't be there," said Maple, peeping over Hunston's shoulders.

"You mean I shan't meet you there," cried Jack, shying a biscuit at Maple, which hit him on the ear, and made it tingle till he howled again.

Hunston and Maple went away, and shut the door of the cabin.

The key was on the outside, and it caught Maple's attention.

"Lock them in," he exclaimed.

"What?" said Hunston.

"Keep them in the cabin, and then we shall be sure of not being worried any more by them, because they'll go down with the ship. You heard the captain say she could not live much longer in this sea. The wind is as bad as it was last night, and threatens to get worse."

Hunston caught at the idea, and turned the key in the lock as noiselessly as possible.

What Maple had stated was the truth.

Captain Cuttle and Mr. Thompson, the first mate, had determined to abandon the ship.

She was fully covered by insurance, and rather than risk being wrecked on the unknown—to them—shores of the Natuna Islands, and cast amongst the inhospitable and savage natives, they decided to take to the boats.

The boats were launched with great difficulty, as the sea ran very high, and with wind and tide there was danger of their being stove in.

Hunston and Maple made haste to get up the companion.

They had not ascended more than five steps before the vessel shipped a heavy sea, which ran in a volume down the hatch, and, striking the boys, hurled them backwards.

Stunned and bleeding, they lay on the deck deprived of sense or motion.

CHAPTER XL

WRECKED.

THE first boat, containing the captain and several of the crew, had been successfully launched, and cleared the ship.

But the second was not so fortunate.

In it were the first and second mate and the remainder of the crew.

A wave dashed it against the side of the ship. It heeled over, filled, and turned bottom up.

Dreadful cries ascended to Heaven. Wretched men struggled for a brief space in the water, and then all was still.

Hearing the cries, Jack looked out of the porthole and saw his shipmates drowning.

"Dick!" he cried, in alarm, "they have taken to the boats. The ship's launch is stove in. Hunston wasn't chaffing after all."

He rushed to the door of the cabin only to find it fastened, and made frantic efforts to open it.

"We're fastened in," he cried. "Hunston must have done this."

Pale with rage and fear, he increased his endeavours to force a way out, which he at last succeeded in doing, by the help of his thick boots.

He literally kicked his way out.

Hunston and Maple were just recovering their senses.

Shaking the former, Jack said, "What is the meaning of this?"

With a vacant stare Hunston looked sullenly at him, but made no answer.

Rushing on deck, Jack saw the boat in which the captain was gradually growing smaller as distance separated it from the doomed ship.

He shouted himself hoarse, and made signals, but without avail. His shipmates could not have come back to his rescue if they had been desirous of doing so.

At such a time all the selfishness in a man's nature comes to the surface.

The ship was deserted.

With a tremour of the heart Jack realised the fact, and he gazed dismally at the pieces of the broken boat, which were tossing about in wanton sport by the wild waves.

Hunston and Maple were caught in their own trap.

Sent below to bring up any who might be unaware of Captain Cuttle's intention to abandon the ship, they had endeavoured to seal the fate of Jack, Harvey and Mr. Mole.

The wave which knocked them insensible at the foot of the companion-ladder was proper retribution, and now they were destined to share those dangers to which they would have condemned their messmates.

Harvey, who had followed Jack, stood by his side sharing his fears and blank looks.

Cast away, as it were, in the middle of an almost unknown sea, in a water-logged vessel, which even then was a wreck, their prospect was indeed miserable.

"Go down below, Dick, and shy a bucket of water over Mole," said Jack, "and bring him into the captain's cabin. We must hold a council, and see what is to be done."

Harvey obeyed orders with alacrity, and succeeded, after thoroughly dousing Mr. Mole, in rousing that gentleman to a sense of his position.

He was about to apply his lips again to the brandy bottle, but Harvey threw it on the floor and broke it.

"This is not a time for drinking, sir," he exclaimed; "we are left to ourselves, and the ship is sinking."

"Bless me! where is the captain?" exclaimed Mr. Mole. "I will go and remonstrate with him."

He staggered into the captain's cabin, where he saw Jack sitting at a table, Hunston and Maple were standing sheepishly before him.

"What is this I hear, Harkaway?" asked Mr. Mole.

"We five are the only souls on board this ship," answered Jack; "and as someone must take the lead, I have made myself captain. If anyone refuses to obey my orders, I will shoot him with one of Captain Cuttle's pistols."

He placed one before him as he spoke.

"Very improper conduct of the captain to leave me here," remarked Mr. Mole. "I am a passenger and the proprietor of a tea-garden in China. My life is too precious to be entrusted to a parcel of boys."

"Mr. Mole," replied Jack, sternly, "understand that in the face of our common danger——"

"Uncommon danger," hazarded Mr. Mole.

"Our positions are reversed," continued Jack, not heeding his interruption, "and please God, I will take successful command of this ship and run her ashore somewhere. The cargo is chiefly cotton goods, and I hope she will

float. If you must behave like an old woman instead of a man go to bed."

"Harkaway," cried Mr. Mole, with drunken gravity, "this language to me is unseemly. It was I who taught your young ideas how to shoot. Talking of shooting reminds me that pistols are dangerous. Remove that pistol—you will not? Very well; a time will come. You called me an old woman—I shall not forget you. Mr. Crawcour shall hear of this."

"He thinks he's back again at Pomona House," said Harvey.

"Danger," continued the inebriated schoolmaster. "What do boys know about danger? The ships all ri'; I'm all ri'; but the winds blow. It pleases them and doesn't hurt us. I shall go and turn in. Call me when the bell strikes for dinner."

And he rolled away to his bunk with an unsteady gait.

"There's not much help to be expected from him," said Jack. "We are in the hands of Providence, and as we have sighted land, we may hope. As for you, Hunston, and you, Maple, you tried to murder Harvey and myself."

"We——" began Hunston.

"Be silent!" cried Jack, authoritatively. "I am captain here. By leaving us in the ship when all the others were going, you were guilty of intent to murder; and when the time comes, you shall see that I can repay my debts with interest."

"I am very sorry," said Maple. "It was Hunston who did it."

"You crammer," replied Hunston, "you suggested it to me. I should have been off in the first boat with Sinclair, if it had not been for you; and to show you, Harkaway, that I wish to make amends, tell me what to do and I'll do it."

"You can do nothing," answered Jack; "at the pumps your strength would not be of much use. My opinion is that the ship has taken in as much water as she will. The captain abandoned her too soon, but it's all of a piece with his antecedents. All I want you and Maple to do is to clear out; get out of my sight, for I hate to look at you; only mind one thing, don't play any more tricks, for if you do, by Heaven, I'll shoot you!"

The boys slunk out of the cabin, and Jack was alone with Harvey.

"We're in for it," said the latter.

"So long as we can drift ashore, I don't care," remarked Jack, thoughtfully. "While there's life there's hope."

"So there is."

"I'm peckish. We must keep up our strength. Go to the steward's cabin, and see what you can find. They killed some fowls yesterday."

Harvey went away, and presently returned with a couple of cold roast fowls and the remains of a ham, of which they partook heartily, washing down the repast with some bottled ale.

"That's the stuff, Dick," said Jack. "I don't believe in spirits when you've got to keep your wits about you. What's the time?"

Harvey looked at the clock. It had stopped.

"I should guess it was about three," he said.

"Then at the rate we are being driven by the tide, we shall strike about midnight—an awkward time, but there's no help for it."

"About those islands—are there not always coral reefs?"

"Nearly always."

"Then we shall be some distance from the shore. Why not set Hunston and Maple to work, making a raft?" suggested Harvey.

"Not half a bad idea. If we can save some of the stores, and knock up a camp, we shall be all right, though we are rather out of the course of ships, and may look forward to a long captivity if we fall into the hands of the natives," answered Jack.

"Are they cannibals?"

"Some of them are, and the Malays are terrible pirates. Still we needn't funk. It's better to be here than in the boat that went down—poor fellows. They are all gone to their account."

"Mole will be ashamed of himself when he comes to," remarked Harvey.

"So he ought, the beast," Jack answered indignantly.

Jack was one of those who are eminently fitted to take the lead in anything and everything.

It has been well said, that some are born to command ; others to obey.

The only man left on board, who ought to have been of use by his matured judgment and ripe experience, was incapacitated, by indulgence in drink ; of all vices the most injurious and debasing.

The position of the boys was extremely critical.

Every wave that struck the ship threatened to knock her to pieces, and without boats, what help could there be for those on board, if she foundered in deep water.

Going on deck, Jack set Hunston and Maple to work, directing their efforts, and helping them occasionally.

Before night fell, a large serviceable raft was constructed, and they waited with impatience for what would happen next.

They made out the land distinctly now.

A strong current seemed to have set into the shore in which the ship was caught, for she moved with greater quickness, and in a straight line, instead of rolling about, first this way and then that, with every turn of the wind.

The land was low lying, and a heavy surf broke on the beach, and from the white clouds of spray that dashed into the air, about the distance of a mile and a half from the beach, they fancied there must be a ledge of rocks straight ahead of them.

"Sleep is out of the question," said Jack, "we must keep on the look-out—to be ready to launch the raft, if she goes to pieces when she strikes."

The moments passed anxiously.

Drenched with spray, and worn out for want of sleep, the boys looked ill and haggard.

In that hot region the air was warm, though not sultry, and they did not experience any of the evils which attend upon severe cold.

The current in which the ship was involved set in shorewards, and in the clear, beautiful moonlight, the boys could see her gradually nearing the line of surf.

So imminent grew the danger that Jack exclaimed—

"One of you go below and wake up Mr. Mole—bring him on deck, drunk or sober."

Harvey set out to execute this mission.

Mr. Mole had turned in "all standing," and when roughly shaken, jumped out of his bunk in a fright.

"What's the matter? Is dinner ready?" he asked.

"You'll have no dinner to-day, sir," replied Harvey, "except what you can cadge anywhere."

"Cadge," repeated Mr. Mole, "that is not a word in my dictionary. Your tendency to slang, Harvey, will bring you to a bad end. If there's no dinner, why rouse me from my sweet and refreshing slumber?"

"Because the ship is deserted, and we shall strike almost directly on the rocks."

So emphatically and earnestly did Harvey speak that Mr. Mole began slowly to comprehend the position in which they were placed.

"If they have all gone, why did they leave me?" he inquired.

"You'd best ask them. I don't know," replied Harvey.

"Who is managing the ship?"

"Jack is, as well as he can, though she is not capable of much management. We've got a raft made, and that's all we can do."

"Where are the boats?"

"One is stove in, and the other is gone off with the captain and part of the crew."

"The danger is pressing. I will come on deck and support you with my presence in this trying emergency," said Mr. Mole.

Harvey did not care much for his presence, but was glad that he was sober enough to save him the trouble of carrying him up.

When they reached the deck the scene was a grand one.

The moon was rising high in the heavens, and the wind had somewhat subsided, though the ocean was in a state of perturbation.

Every wave broke splendidly over the rocks ahead, and a cloud of spray dashed high into the air.

Suddenly Jack cried out—

"Mind yourselves, it's coming!"

And, in a few seconds, the ship trembled from stem to stern.

She had struck.

Fortunately the wave which carried her on to the coral reef had placed her in a high position, and though the waves broke over her in constant succession, she did not go to pieces.

The boys sheltered themselves as well they could, and Mr. Mole, after he had been twice taken off his legs, followed their example.

"Shall we launch the raft?" asked Harvey.

"Not till this sea is over," answered Hunston. "I am an old sailor, you know, and if you take my advice, you will remain where you are. Stick to the ship as long as she will hold together."

It was impossible to go below now, as each wave dashed into the hold and filled the ship. All the boys could do was to hang on with might and main and wait for a cessation in the war of the elements.

By morning they might hope for a calmer sea.

"This is painful," said Mr. Mole, as a small quarter-cask rolled up against his legs, and he rubbed his shins.

"Hold tight, sir, or else you'll be food for fishes," cried Jack.

"It's all very well, my young friend, to say, 'Hold on,'" replied Mr. Mole, "when you have had your shins hurt and your arms are every now and then wrenched from their sockets."

"That's nothing," answered Jack; "my shins were barked long ago, and I don't know whether I have any arms or not."

"Truly a draught of brandy would revive me. Oh!"

The latter exclamation was caused by a huge wave, which struck him in the face and filled his mouth with water.

"Won't that do as well?" asked Jack, when the water had rolled off.

"It is nauseous; very much so. Brine is not exhilarating; far from it."

"Look out, sir; there's another coming!" replied Harvey, turning his back to the wave.

Mr. Mole was not so fortunate; he received it broad-side on, and spluttered dreadfully.

"If this goes on I shall never get the salt out of my system," he said. "Pickled pork will be nothing to me. If you love me, Harkaway, go below and get me a drink of something."

"And be drowned in the attempt. Thank you," answered Jack, "I'd rather not. Hang on till morning, and it will be all right."

"Morning is far distant. I shall be pickled before then," groaned Mr. Mole.

However, there was no help for it, and the boys had to "hang on," as Jack phrased it, for dear life, while the waves at intervals dashed over the devoted ship.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RAFT.

IMPATIENTLY the boys waited for morning to dawn, and when it did, the scene which met their eyes presented a singular contrast to the horrors of the day before.

The sea was comparatively calm. No rain fell. A warm, glowing sun shone out in all the fierceness of tropical splendour.

It was found that the vessel, though water-logged, was placed by the violence of the storm in a hollow basin in the reef.

Her store-rooms were free from water, and though their contents were somewhat damaged by the sea, there was reasonable expectation that a large quantity of provisions and stores would be available for their use.

When the storm abated and the dawn broke, Jack looked around him.

Mr. Mole had fallen asleep on the deck; so had Hunston and Maple; only Jack and Harvey remained awake.

"Nice fellows to help a lame dog over a stile, aren't they?" said Jack sarcastically.

"What are we to do now?" asked Harvey.

"I'll tell you, for I've been thinking all night. The storm is over, the ship is high if not dry, and she'll live where she is till the next storm comes."

"When will that be?"

"Who can say? In these beastly latitudes storms come on, of their own sweet will, at any time. The island we see before us looks as if it was deserted. All the better; there will be no niggers to eat us up."

"Don't," said Harvey, with a shudder.

"I didn't mean to funk you," continued Jack, "but you can't trust the inhabitants you find on those outlying

islands in the China Sea. We must launch the raft, and take a lot of things on shore, and build a castle in which we can put our stores, because everything must be saved from the ship that is possible to carry away, and we have no time to lose. Another storm will finish the old 'Fairy.'"

"I wonder where Captain Cuttle is," remarked Harvey.

"Perhaps he's made some land."

"He'd have been glad if he had remained on board if he could see us now."

"I'm very glad he didn't," said Jack. "He is a selfish, dangerous, bad man. The way in which he left the ship showed that he cared for nobody but himself. We have got the island we see before us to ourselves."

"If there are no niggers."

"If the niggers, as you call them, don't show themselves for a few days, I'll make a castle which will enable us to defy any number of them, and we'll call it Jack's castle," answered Jack.

"May I have a nap somewhere? I'm dead beat," exclaimed Harvey, with another yawn, as he rubbed his eyes with his knuckles.

"Not yet; dive into the cabin, and bring up what you can find. Something to eat and drink will put us both right—or, stop a bit. I'll come with you."

They went below together and found something to satisfy their hunger with, and lighting a fire, they made some tea, which was very refreshing.

"Now to work," said Jack.

"Right you are," replied Harvey. "I feel another man."

"You'll stick to me, Dick," cried Jack, who looked at a pistol he had in his pocket.

"Never fear," replied Harvey again.

"I'm captain now, and you are my lieutenant. I'm not going to stand any nonsense from anybody."

"Give your orders," said Harvey, laughing.

"Go and kick Mole, Hunston, and Maple in the ribs till you wake them."

"Right."

"I find the brains, and they'll have to find arms. In other words, they'll have to do the work."

"I'll lay into Mole first," said Harvey, "and then I'll let Hunston and his dirty sneak Maple have it."

He went away grinning, as if he liked the idea of the task he had taken in hand.

A vigorous kick in the side roused Mr. Mole, who sprang to his feet, and looked wildly around him.

"Where are we?" he cried; "and what is the meaning of this outrage? Harvey, you kicked me; are you aware that you actually had the hardihood to kick, in the neighbourhood of the fifth rib, your late respected senior master and the proprietor of innumerable Hyson shrubs in a China tea-garden, near Canton."

"Captain's orders, sir," replied Harvey.

"The captain! I thought all but ourselves had left the ship."

Jack now made his appearance, and said—

"I have made myself the captain, Mr. Mole, and I shall act with the utmost severity to those who refuse to obey me."

Hunston and Maple had been roused by Harvey, and stood sleepily surveying the scene, which was a lovely one.

While they had been slumbering, some magician seemed to have shaken his wand and the whole situation had been changed.

Wind had given place to a gentle breeze; huge waves were now ripples. Black clouds gave way to a bright, sunlit sky, and inside the coral reef the water was calm as a millpond.

Mr. Mole was carried away by the situation.

"My dear boys," he exclaimed, "we have been saved by a miracle from a watery grave, yet we do not know what dangers may confront us. You are singularly fortunate in having me to direct your efforts—with my mature judgment and ripe experience, you will find me a tower of strength, and——"

"It seems to me, Mr. Mole, that you do not know what you are saying; and as this is a time for acting, and not talking, you may oblige me by helping to launch the raft," replied Jack. "Now then, Hunston, wake up. Lend a hand, Maple."

"I want some breakfast," replied Hunston.

"Happy thought!" exclaimed Mr. Mole. "The inner man begins to rumble, and thereby gives warning that there is a hollow space which wants filling up."

"It will have to want," answered Jack, "until the raft has been to the island and back; I'll stand no nonsense. My orders must be obeyed."

So determined was Jack's manner that the raft was launched, and several things which it was considered would be of the first importance, were placed upon it.

"Now then," cried Jack; steady all, away we go."

As they were about to push off, they heard a whining noise.

"That's the captain's dog, Nero," said Harvey. "He's in the cabin. It's a wonder he wasn't drowned."

"Go and cut him loose. A good watch-dog will be just the thing we want," replied Jack.

Nero was a fine specimen of the black curly-haired retriever, and when Harvey cut the rope which fastened him, he rushed on deck, and springing on the raft, caressed the boys, who had always been kind to him, with every demonstration of affection.

After this, the raft was not long in reaching the shore, it being propelled by a light wind and the sail which Jack hoisted.

A small inlet or creek was espied, and up this the raft was pushed with a long pole, until a landing-place was reached.

Jack sprang ashore, and, ticking the pole in the earth, cried—

"I take possession of this island in the name of our gracious Sovereign. Hurrah for the Queen!"

"Hurrah! hurrah!" cried everybody, except Mr. Mole, who had been overhauling the "luggage," as he called what had been placed on the raft, and discovered a case of spirits, a bottle of which he was raising to his lips.

Jack saw this, and snatching the bottle from him exclaimed: "At it again, are you? Say 'Hurrah for the Queen!'"

"God save the Queen!" cried Mr. Mole, adding, "Don't be so violent, Harkaway. I am sure I'm as loyal as anybody, but after what we have gone through we must keep our spirits up."

"When you've earned your rations you shall have them, not before," replied Jack. "I shall call this Harkaway Island. Dick, light a fire, and give them some

thing to eat and drink, while I go inland and explore a place for us to pitch our tent."

Leaving his lieutenant to follow his instructions, Jack climbed up a sandhill and commenced his exploring expedition.

CHAPTER XIII.

BUILDING JACK'S CASTLE.

IF Jack had not been so anxious, his walk would have been a delightful one.

The island on which his lot had been cast was well wooded and the vegetation rank and luxuriant.

As he struck inland he came upon groves of tall trees, mixed with cocoa and betel nut palms.

It is scarcely possible to convey an idea of the rich grouping of the palms and shrubbery and festooning vines, as the sun shot into the abundant foliage, long horizontal pencils of golden light.

Coffee trees grew wild, and were covered with berries nearly ripe.

The sharp hiss of a snake, as it glided away in the long grass, warned him to be careful.

Before him, in the distance, loomed a mighty mountain, rising majestically from the earth.

Its high top, hundreds of feet above the level of the sea, was hidden in the early morning by horizontal clouds, which parted while he was gazing upon them, and let down a band of bright sunlight over its dark clefts.

The unbroken sweep of its sides, from its summit to the sea, was most majestic; but from narrow grooves that he perceived, Jack thought it was a volcano, and had been recently in a state of eruption.

He had not gone more than a quarter of a mile from the sea, along a level country, when he came to a slight hill.

Behind this was a clump of trees of a moderate height, and of a circular shape.

It immediately occurred to him that if those in the centre were cut down, and more trees planted, or stakes—which would grow in that fertile climate—stuck in between the spaces, an excellent wall for a castle would be made

The hill hid the trees from the shore, so that smoke from a fire would be dissipated before it reached the summit of the eminence.

On the other side, or inland, a perfect forest of trees encircled a space of about thirty acres of rich land, covered with long grass and brushwood.

This land Jack saw would do to grow corn or potatoes, or, indeed, anything which he could rescue from the wreck.

So he determined to select this as his dwelling-place.

Whether the island was inhabited or not, or what animals infested it, he could not tell.

His first care was to make a house, into which he could take everything that he could rescue from the wreck.

Storms were so violent and so sudden in those regions that they might go to sleep at night and find the next morning that not a single vestige of the ill-fated "Fairy" remained.

Returning to the creek, where he had left his companions, he took them to look at the spot he had selected for a dwelling-place.

They all approved of it, and he set Hunston and Maple to work with an axe to clear the interior, leaving a circle of trees all round.

Mr. Mole dug holes, in which were placed the trees cut down, so as to fill up the gaps, and by nightfall there was a thick fence, through which nothing could pass.

A small opening was left to serve as a door, and a large sail was spread over the top to keep out the rain and dew.

While this was being done, Jack and Harvey made several trips to the ship on the raft, and brought back a variety of articles, which they piled in a heap on the land.

They made their dinner on salt beef and biscuit, washing it down with some excellent water, which welled up from a spring near the castle, as they already called their future habitation.

For more than a fortnight they worked incessantly.

Planks brought from the ship divided the interior of the castle into rooms. Each one had a bedroom, and bedding brought from the ship supplied them with something to lay upon, and the covering they had been accustomed to.

The rooms were comfortably furnished with the ship's furniture, and in one large room, which they termed the warehouse, all sorts of things were stored—guns, powder, shot, provisions, in short, all they could save from the wreck.

By tearing up the deck they made their partitions, and the doors of the cabins were easily fixed. Planks, placed slantingly against a central beam, made a capital roof, and they were able to defy the weather, while sails nailed all round the inside of the castle, kept out the wind from the chinks between the trees which made the outer wall.

The bedrooms ran round the castle, and the sitting-room was in the centre, being divided from the other room, or the warehouse, by long planks placed in the earth.

They had several casks of oil, and lamps in which to burn it as well as candles, biscuits, potted meats, salt beef, and other things saved from the ship—provisions to last them for at least six months.

They knew not what animals and birds the island could supply them with, as they had been too busy in building their castle to look about them.

At length it was finished, and very proud Jack was of it.

Hidden from the sea and protected from the wind in front by the hill we have mentioned, it was equally protected in the rear by the forest of trees.

The dog, Nero, was chained up close to the entrance, so that no one could approach without his giving notice.

When the ship had been ransacked of nearly everything that was worth having, another storm arose and shattered the wreck to pieces.

Jack, however, did not care for this. It was no longer a misfortune.

His companions had worked with a will, and recognised his leadership, being well satisfied with the result of his clever devices.

They had an excellent house to live in, with ample stores to last them for some months, and though on a desert island in a remote part of the uncivilised world, they had many of the comforts and luxuries of civilisation to console them in their enforced exile.

When the castle was finished, and they could cease from their labours, when the floor was planked over and

the wind kept out by sails, which hung like tapestry on the walls, Jack determined to give a banquet, which he did in good style.

After dinner wine was put on the table, and he rose to make a speech.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I have to thank you for your laudable exertions on behalf of our little commonwealth. We have now a house to live in, which is by no means contemptible. Our stores of provisions will last us for six months or thereabouts. Now, our next care will be to explore the island, and to dig up and plant the land which lies about our castle. We have a sack of corn, some barley, and potatoes.

"How long we shall be destined to live upon this island, or what our adventures may be, none of us can venture to say, but this I will assert, we have a great deal to be thankful for; and I trust that we shall live in harmony and be good friends. I know one thing, and that is, I mean to keep order in our little settlement, and without being a tyrant, I will be obeyed. Mr. Mole knows that nothing can be done without discipline."

"Hear, hear!" from Mr. Mole.

Jack sat down, and Harvey got up, saying—

"I beg to propose the health of Jack Harkaway, our monarch. Jack the First, the king of Harkaway Island!"

The toast was drunk with apparent enthusiasm, for however much Hunston and Maple may have disliked him in their hearts, they did not think fit to give their opinion free vent at that time.

It was agreed that the next day they would explore the island.

Each of them was supplied with a gun and powder and shot, so as to be ready for any emergency.

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. MOLE COMES TO GRIEF.

MR. MOLE did not in any way attempt to thwart Jack, for he was afraid of him. Jack kept the key of the warehouse, and distributed the stores impartially; but when

Mr. Mole and Hunston and Maple got together, they gave expression to their discontent.

"It's true," said Mr. Mole, "that we have a good house and that everything goes on well; but we have worked hard to get things together. Why should Harkaway keep the command? My age and my position entitle me to be the commander."

"Of course," replied Hunston. "If Harkaway's vanity didn't blind him, he would see that in a minute."

"I vote," said Maple, "that we take his gun some night, and make him our servant."

"Don't you know," replied Hunston, "that he and Harvey never sleep at the same time? Either he is on guard or Harvey; it's like fellows keeping watch on board ship."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Mole, "our time will come; we must not do anything in a hurry. If we were to make an attempt and fail, our position would be particularly unpleasant."

"I'm not going to be his slave longer than I can help," remarked Hunston.

They had been digging up the ground and planting potatoes for some hours, under a hot sun, which did not improve their temper. As Jack kept the key of the warehouse, they could get nothing to eat or drink without his permission, and were entirely in his power.

Jack and Harvey had gone out with their guns to explore the neighbourhood and bring home some fresh meat if any could be found.

Some thick clouds that had been gathering began to pour down a perfect flood of rain.

The drops were so large, and fell with such momentum, that it seemed like standing under a heavy shower-bath.

Lightning gleamed as it only does in tropical lands, and the thunder roared as if a park of artillery was at work.

The little party took refuge in the castle, and were presently joined by Jack and Harvey, who had shot several parrots and a small antelope; these were prepared for dinner, and with cocoanuts and mangoes, made an excellent repast.

"The island," said Jack, "appears to be much bigger than I had any idea of. It is long and rather narrow. I think if we ascended the mountain, we could see about a

couple of miles inland. We should get a good view with a glass."

"Let's go this afternoon," exclaimed Hunston. "I'm tired of planting 'taters."

"Very well. Maple shall stop at home and guard the castle and look out for tigers, for Harvey declares he saw one in a bit of jungle," replied Jack.

"That's pleasant," answered Hunston. "Did you see any niggers?"

"Not the slightest, and I should fancy that the island is uninhabited."

"I propose," remarked Mr. Mole, "that I should build a little hut on the top of the hill, near our house, erect a flagstaff, and spend a portion of each day on the look-out with a telescope; because I have no wish to pass the remainder of my valuable existence on this island, and if I should attract the attention of a passing ship, we should all be taken off."

"I have no objection to that," replied Jack.

The idea was considered so good, that they postponed their exploring expedition, and that very day set to work and erected Mr. Mole's observatory.

An excellent view of the ocean was secured from the hill, and the Union Jack waved gaily in the breeze from the summit of the flagstaff.

"I hope it won't attract the attention of the Malay pirates, if ever they get into these regions," remarked Hunston.

Mr. Mole was charmed with his device, and passed hours in the box looking through a telescope, which he had placed on a stand.

Everything soon got into good working order. Mr. Mole was the signalman, and his duty consisted in keeping a look-out. Harvey and Jack looked after the castle, and went out shooting. Maple was the servant and did all the drudgery; while Hunston had the management of the farm, and sowed the crops.

As we have said, there was a good deal of lurking discontent at Jack's high-handed manner, but as yet it had not shown itself in any marked degree.

Choosing a very fine day, an exploring expedition was formed to ascend the mountain, which had all the appearance of an extinct volcano.

Jack, Harvey, Hunston, and Mr. Mole formed the party, Maple remaining behind to wash the plates and dishes saved from the wreck, and cook the dinner.

Several hours were occupied in ascending the sides of the mountain, but a splendid view was attained when the summit was reached.

The land extended as far as the eye could reach, and seemed rather to be part of some large continent, than the little island they had imagined it to be.

A hollow cone, resembling the mouth of a huge well, enabled Mr. Mole to speak with certainty about the origin of the mountain.

Standing upon the edge of the extinct crater, and pointing with a bamboo to the black and yawning gulf, he exclaimed—

“My dear boys, we should never neglect an opportunity of imparting useful knowledge. This is a volcanic mountain. It may have been silent for centuries, and it may break out again in five minutes.”

The boys started back a little at this declaration.

“Yes,” continued Mr. Mole, waving his arm grandly, “who can tell? Amidst the crash of empires and the fall of worlds what is the silence of one volcanic mountain? In these dark and murky depths was once a fountain of smoke and flame. The shaft may descend miles into the bosom of the earth. Woe to the unlucky wretch who tumbled down it!”

Suddenly there was a slight noise, as if the lava crust on which the speaker was standing, was giving way.

Mr. Mole had vanished.

Two hands were seen for a moment clutching at the treacherous surface, there was a dismal yell, and the late senior master of Pomona House academy for young gentlemen had, with as little fuss as possible under the circumstances, glided down the crater.

“Good-bye,” cried Harvey.

“Why, he’s gone!” exclaimed Hunston. “He might have said he was going.”

“It’s nothing to laugh at,” remarked Jack. “I don’t suppose we shall see him again till the next eruption.”

“How about the tea-garden?”

“Hunston,” said Jack, in a tone of mild remonstrance,

"you're an unfeeling beast. Here we are, on a desert island, like orphan children, and yet you laugh."

"Who could help laughing? It's so comical," replied Hunston.

"If you're not serious I'll chuck you after him," said Jack, making a threatening gesture.

Hunston retreated to a safe distance.

"Can't we do something for him?" asked Harvey.

"'Fraid not," replied Jack. "It's dangerous to go near. Poor old Mole!"

It seemed as if Mr. Mole had disappeared for ever from the scene, as the depth of the hole down which he had fallen might be very great.

His only chance was to alight on some inequality in the sides. It was useless to try to help him, and the boys sorrowfully wended their way homewards, never expecting to see him again.

The loss of one of their number saddened them.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BURNING MOUNTAIN.

THE accident which had happened to Mr. Mole was of so sudden a nature that the boys could not actually believe for a time that one of their party had been snatched from them by a mysterious and awful death.

It seemed but a moment ago that he was talking to them, and explaining the nature of the extinct volcano that had engulfed him.

He had probably sunk deep down into the bowels of the earth, losing his life in the thick vapours which hovered about the shaft, if he was not dashed to pieces in his descent.

Even Hunston grew grave when the serious side of the matter overcame the laughable one.

"I didn't mean anything," he said; "I'm as sorry for Mole as you are, though he wasn't much good, and he'd never given me any cause to like him."

"Never say anything bad of the dead. Let him rest. We don't know whose turn it may be next," said Jack.

"You're right there," remarked Hunston. "In these countries you may put your foot on what seems to be a stick, and get bitten by a snake, or a tiger may have a go in at you for looking at him too closely, or the niggers may take a liking to your head. Hullo! hold up."

They had reached the level ground again, and this exclamation was occasioned by a sudden movement of the earth, causing the boys to stumble.

The next minute there began a low heavy rumbling, deep down in the earth.

It was not a roar, but such a rattling or quick succession of reports as is made when a number of heavily-laden coaches are driven rapidly down a steep street paved with round cobble stones.

The following minute it seemed as if some invisible giant had seized the boys and thrown them forward, and then pulled them back with the greatest violence.

"Lie down! lie down!" shouted Jack. "It is an earthquake, and a stinger, too."

"You needn't say 'lie down' when a fellow can't keep his legs," replied Hunston, who was one of those boys who will have their say, even when death and danger are staring them in the face.

For a brief space the boys lay perfectly still, rather expecting that the earth might open and swallow them up.

The first shock, however, was not followed by another.

Jack computed that the time which elapsed between hearing the rumbling noise and the feeling of the shock was about five seconds.

It was the time of year when the monsoon prevailed, and the wind blows refreshingly day and night.

But after this earthquake there was not the slightest perceptible motion of the air.

The tree-toads stopped their steady piping, and the insects all ceased their shrill music.

"I say," cried Hunston, looking up.

"What?" asked Jack, shivering.

"Old Mole's been waking them up down below, hasn't he? Perhaps they've been waiting for him down there, and think it the cheese to give him a chyaïke on his arrival."

"How can you joke at such a time as this?" asked Jack.

"Doesn't it look like it?" replied Hunston, in an argumentative tone. "Here is old Mole gone and fallen down the crater of a volcano. Nobody asked him to. He did it all of his own free will, and directly afterwards there's this shindy—it's cause and effect."

No one answered him. Jack and Harvey were too much upset at this perturbation of nature to care for chaffing.

Everything was so absolutely quiet that it seemed as if all nature was waiting in dread anticipation of some coming catastrophe.

Such an unnatural stillness was certainly more painful than the howling of the most violent tempest, or the roar of the heaviest thunder.

The utter helplessness which one feels at such a time, when even the solid earth groans and trembles beneath one's feet, makes the solitude most keenly painful.

It was half-an-hour—and that half-hour seemed an age—before the wind began to blow, or before at least the animals and insects resumed their cries and humming.

Jack had often wished to see an earthquake, but after he had witnessed one there was something in the very sound of the word which made him shudder.

The boys, finding the earthquake was over, went back to their castle, and ate the dinner which Maple had provided for them.

Although they did not care for Mr. Mole, they could not help feeling his loss; and Jack brought some wine out of the warehouse after dinner to cheer them up a little.

It seemed to grow dark sooner than usual that evening.

Maple, who had gone outside for some purpose, rushed in again, saying—

"The mountain's on fire!"

"What does he mean?" asked Jack.

"I thought the earthquake meant more than we saw at first," answered Hunston. "If the mountain's on fire, as Maple says, then there must be an eruption. Old Mole can't let us alone."

"I wish you'd let him alone. You've no respect for anyone, dead or alive," exclaimed Jack, angrily.

"I haven't much for you," growled Hunston.

Jack and Harvey ran outside the castle and perceived that the mountain was actually in a state of eruption.

Volcanic influences were at work.

Three distinct columns of flame had burst forth, all of them within the verge of the crater, and their tops united in the air in a troubled, confused manner.

At intervals showers of stones about the size of walnuts were thrown into the air, and these were followed by clouds of ashes.

Jack and Harvey gazed at the terrible sight with awe.

Red lines, like fiery serpents, were to be seen on the side of the mountain, showing the course taken by the burning lava.

"Look out for Mole," said Hunston, who had followed them into the open air. "He'll come out like a fossil presently."

Jack did not feel pleased at this constant levity of Hunston's and hitting out at him, he sent him into Maple's arms, saying—

"If you have no decency left in you, I must teach you that I have. Get out."

Hunston retired with Maple, and his hatred of Jack increased at the blow he had received.

"Tell you what, Map, old boy," he said between his teeth, "I shan't stand this much longer. I'd rather cut the camp, and go and do my best with a gun in some other part of the island. It's been King Harkaway long enough. I'll make it King Hunston or die for it."

"You know I'll stick to you like bricks," answered Maple.

"We'll wait till we see what this jolly old mountain means to do, and then leave everything to me," said Hunston. "This state of things isn't good enough for me by a long way. I can't get a glass of grog unless his majesty Jack the First is in a good temper and chances to produce a bottle from the warehouse."

The mountain continued to burn and throw up stones and lava and ashes until the middle of the next day.

Then the eruption subsided as rapidly as it had begun.

It was dreadful to think that Mr. Mole's grave had been the crater of a volcano, and that his was a winding-sheet of molten lava.

CHAPTER XVI.

HUNSTON PROCLAIMS HIMSELF KING OF THE ISLAND.

ALL danger of the lava or the ashes covering the castle was at an end for the present.

Some weeks passed, and everything went on at the little settlement as well as the boys could wish.

Such was the fertility of the island that the land they had dug up and planted began to show a favourable return, and a promise of excellent crops.

Jack did not expect to live there all his life, but he knew that his stores would not last for ever, and if they did not make the most of their opportunities they would have to undergo great privation, if they did not die of starvation.

A good look-out was kept at the signal station which the unfortunate Mr. Mole had caused to be erected.

It seemed that the island on which their lot was cast was not in the track of ships—for not a sail was to be seen.

One day, however, Harvey, who was engaged in sweeping the sea with his glass, reported a sail, and every effort was made to arrest the attention of those on board.

A huge fire was lighted, and guns were fired without avail.

The ship passed on its way, and was soon lost to sight.

"No go, Dick," said Jack with a sigh, as the vessel's outline sank below the edge of the horizon.

"Better luck next time," said Harvey.

"I hope so. Turn it up for to-day, and come and talk to me. We'll send Maple up here, and give Hunston something to do."

Jack had put his gun down by the side of the shed. A dark figure passed quickly by him, and seized it.

"Will you give Hunston something to do?" he exclaimed. "Perhaps it will be the other way."

Jack looked up and saw Hunston. At the same time Maple had seized Harvey's gun, and the two friends were helpless.

"What do you mean?" asked Jack, clenching his fists.

"Just this. We've had enough of your reign," answered Hunston. "I'm going to be king, and if you don't obey me, why, I'll put a bullet through your head. The tables are turned now. Harvey will stop here and keep a look-out, while you go and hoe the potatoes. When Maple and I have had our dinner, you may come and eat up the scraps."

"How do you feel now, Jack?" asked Maple, with an odious grin.

Jack gave him a kick on the shin which made him howl.

"That just served you right—who told you to speak?" remarked Hunston. "I'm king, I tell you, and I can say all I want to. Give me the key of the warehouse, Harkaway."

Jack saw Hunston place the rifle against his shoulder, and knew him well enough to be sure that he would fire if he was thwarted, so he tossed the key towards him.

"That's right," said Hunston, triumphantly; "that's how things ought to be. Go and hoe those 'taters, and keep the parrots out of the corn; and you, Harvey, look out, or I'll let you both know the reason why."

He walked off to the castle with Maple, and the two friends were together.

"What an ass you were to leave your gun where Hunston could see it and collar it," exclaimed Harvey.

"I didn't know he meant treachery," answered Jack, looking very crestfallen.

"What shall you do?"

"Go and do what he told me," said Jack. "He's got the run of the spirits now, and he'll be drunk in an hour or two, and then——"

"What will you do?" asked Harvey.

"Wait and see. He'll never more be officer of mine. I'll start him. He shall see how living on cocoanuts and mangoes in the woods agrees with him. Perhaps he'll make a good dinner for a wild beast. I don't care. I wish he'd tumbled down the hole in the mountain instead of old Mole. Hunston always was a bad lot, but Mole had something good about him, if he was an occasional ass."

At sunset Maple came out to Jack, who had been hard at work, and said insolently—"You may come and have your dinner now."

"May I?" said Jack, flinging a dead snake at him, which he had killed with his spade.

"Will it bite?" asked Maple, starting back, and dropping his gun.

Jack sprang forward and seized the weapon.

"If he won't, this will," cried Jack. "Down on your knees and beg my pardon."

Maple hesitated, and Jack fired one barrel over his head, which had the effect of causing Maple to sink down with his hands clasped.

"That's it; I knew you'd do it. Where's Hunston?" continued Jack.

"In the castle," replied Maple.

"What's he doing?"

"Drinking."

"Is he tight?"

"Not quite; but getting on that way," answered Maple. "He says he's the king now, and he's going to hang Harvey to-morrow."

"Is he?" said Jack, between his teeth. "I'll let him know. Get up that tree, and stop there till I come back and tell you to get down. If you dare to move, I'll shoot you like a parrot."

Maple was up the tree like a flash of lightning, and Jack went to the castle.

"Is that you, Maple?" asked Hunston as the door opened.

"Yes," said Jack, altering his voice.

"Come and give me a hand up. I think there's been another earthquake or something. I've tumbled off my chair, and the beastly place goes round with me like winking."

Jack darted forward and had Hunston by the throat before he could seize his gun and attempt to defend himself.

"Hullo! What's this? Let me go, Harkaway," cried Hunston, becoming sober.

"Not yet, my boy; you must come with me. I'll show you how I deal with rebels."

Jack dragged him into open air, and half carried him, half pushed him to the place where he had left Maple.

"Now, Maple, come down. I want you," he said.

"What is it, Jack?" replied Maple in a civil voice, as he made his appearance.

"Take a spade, and dig a hole five feet deep and about two wide. Look sharp, unless you want a tanning."

Hunston let his eyes close, and pretended to be asleep, while the work was going on. In about an hour the hole was dug, and Maple perspiring from every pore, left off.

Jack dragged his enemy to the hole, and put him in feet foremost, and let him sink till his head was on a level with the soil.

"Shovel in," he exclaimed.

"I say, Jack," cried Hunston, coming to himself, and growing alarmed. "Don't be a savage—remember that there are wild beasts and snakes, and birds of a carrion kind here. What do you mean to do?"

"It's a nice bed for a king. Shovel away, Maple," answered Jack.

The earth was quickly thrown in, and pressed down by Jack's feet, until Hunston was buried in the soil, unable to move hand or foot, and only his head appeared above the surface.

"Give me that spade," said Jack.

Maple did so.

"You will stop here all night," continued Jack, "that is to say, if you care for your friend, and you can keep off the snakes and wild things that he seems so much afraid of. I will see what is to be done with him to-morrow morning."

In vain Hunston appealed to Jack to let him go—he turned a deaf ear to his entreaties, and went to seek Harvey, to whom he related what he had done.

"Serve the beggar right," said Harvey.

"He said he meant to hang you to-morrow," continued Jack with a grin.

"Did he?" exclaimed Harvey. "Perhaps he'll think better of it."

They went to the castle, and amused themselves by playing at chess, having saved a board and men from the wreck.

Maple sat down near Hunston, and was quite unable to render him any assistance. He had neither spade nor pickaxe, and could not remove the earth.

"You've betrayed me," said Hunston, who was quite

clear and sober now, under the influence of the danger that threatened him. "Why don't you get me out of this?"

"I can't," replied Maple, sullenly. "It's bad enough to have to sit here all night and watch you."

"Don't leave me—for Heaven's sake don't leave me alone!" cried Hunston, in a voice of deadly terror. "Harkaway only means to punish me—he don't want to kill me. Look in that thicket. I can see the eyes of a tiger gleaming."

"A tiger?" repeated Maple.

"Yes! Look—look!" repeated the terror-stricken youth.

"Oh! If there are tigers about, I shall step it," said Maple, coolly. "I don't care about being eaten up by the wild beasts. Good-night."

Hunston's voice failed him, and he could say no more. His tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and he thought his last hour had come.

Maple walked quickly away, showing his former friend how much reliance there was to be placed upon his partnership, for Maple was one of those who always go from the losing to the winning side.

King Hunston was in a pitiable plight.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SAVAGES.

MAPLE went to the castle, and knocking at the door, was admitted.

"What do you want?" asked Harvey.

"Tell Harkaway, please," replied Maple, "I saw tigers about, and want to come in."

"Have you left Hunston to his fate?" asked Jack, coming forward.

"Yes. I couldn't do him any good."

"You dirty little cur. Shall I poleaxe him?"

"He deserves it, but I don't think I would, because we want a servant," replied Harvey.

"All right," said Jack. "Go inside. Dick, come with

me. I only want to frighten Hunston, and should be sorry if any harm came to him."

Maple went inside, and Jack, followed by Harvey, walked by the soft moonlight to the place where Hunston was buried up to his neck in the ground.

When Hunston saw them he exclaimed—

"Thank God you have come. You were always a generous fellow, Harkaway. Knock me on the head, but don't leave me here to die in the night."

"I'll dig you up," replied Jack, who had brought a spade with him.

In a few minutes the earth was sufficiently loosened to admit of the captive being dragged out, and he was placed upon his legs, which for a time trembled so that he could scarcely stand upright.

"Now, what are you going to do?" asked Jack.

"I hate you, and I'll never make terms with you," replied Hunston. "I've roughed it in various parts of the world, and I daresay I can do so again. I'll work my way down the island, and if I can't turn anything up I'll come back to you and be your servant."

"You'd best make friends, and say you won't kick over the traces again," replied Jack, good-naturedly.

"I shan't," Hunston said, sullenly. "I want to get away from you, and start on my own hook. You can give me a pistol and a few charges of powder and shot if you like."

"Thank you. I'll trust you as far as I can see you and no farther," Jack said. "You can stop if you like, or you can go. Take your choice."

Hunston put his hands in the pockets of his pea-jacket, and holding down his head, walked away, being soon lost to sight amongst the trees that fringed the outskirts of the little farm.

"He'll come back. It's only temper," said Jack.

"What else can he do?" answered Harvey. "He's got no arms. Perhaps he might make a bow and arrow, but he'll be glad enough to come back in time."

"If he doesn't, it's not our fault. Perhaps things will go on smoother now, Dick. We never had a row when we were alone."

"And Maple is just fit for our servant," said Harvey.

"Of course he is—make him work."

"It will serve him right. He backed up Hunston in his revolt, and pretended to be such a friend of his, and when the fortune of war went against him, he was the first to leave him."

"He always was a sneak. Didn't he show just the same spirit at Crawcour's?" replied Jack.

Talking in this way they returned to the castle, and finished their game at chess. Jack slept while Harvey watched, and, when Jack woke up, Harvey took his place.

Their little band was diminishing gradually. First Mr. Mole had been cut off, and now Hunston had left them.

A couple of days passed, and they saw nothing of him. Jack grew uneasy.

"I don't think I ought to leave that fellow Hunston to wander about wild in the woods," he said to Harvey.

"He's lurking about somewhere, and means to drop down upon us when we least expect it," replied the latter.

"I don't think so."

"What will you do? Let him take his chance?"

"No," replied Jack, "I shan't do that. Will you stay here with Maple? I'll take my gun and go out and look for him. I don't like the idea of leaving even Hunston to take his chance in the woods."

"You're more generous than I should be."

"Now, Dick," said Jack, "you know you've got a good heart, and it won't do for you to try to make yourself out a beast."

Jack would have his way, and shouldering his gun, he sallied forth to look for Hunston, forgetting in his generosity how badly he had treated him.

He walked for some hours, and traversed several miles of ground.

The sun was setting when he halted, weary and thirsty.

Throwing some stones up at a tree, he knocked down some ripe cocoanuts, and quenched his thirst. Suddenly he heard a noise.

Looking before him he saw, to his consternation, a band of savages.

He was only hidden from them by a small fringe of brushwood.

They were dancing round and round in a ring, in the middle of which was a human being tied to a stake.

Crawling on his hands and knees to the edge of the brush, Jack took a closer view.

The savages were about twelve in number, and the man in their midst was Hunston.

"It seems to me," muttered Jack, "that my presentiments did not deceive me, and I have come just in time."

His first idea was to fire, but that would have been folly, considering the number of the natives.

Yet Hunston must be rescued.

How to render him material aid was the question.

Lying still on his stomach, Jack ruminated.

It was clear that the natives were performing some savage rite, and that Hunston, who had unluckily fallen into their power, was the object of it.

"I'm king of this island any way," said Jack to himself, "and I'll let them know they're not going to have it all their own way—not much."

Twelve to one, however, was great odds. For once in his life Jack was at a loss.

CHAPTER XVIII.

JACK TO THE RESCUE.

THE savages whom Jack now saw for the first time were very singular-looking beings.

In height and general appearance they closely resembled the Malays.

The colour of the skin and hair was dark, the latter short and crisp, confined on their heads by a red handkerchief, obtained from the natives on the extreme eastern coast.

Their clothing was simply a strip of the inner bark of a tree, beaten with stones until it had become white and opaque, and looking much like rough white paper.

This garment was three or four inches wide, and about three feet long.

It passed round the waist, and covered the loins in such a way that one end hung down in front as far as the knee.

On the arm, above the elbow, some wore a large ring made, apparently, from the stalk of a sea-plant.

Each of the warriors was armed with a cleaver, which he raised high in the right hand.

Some had shields, three or four feet long, but only four or five inches wide, and others again held long spears.

Their dance was merely a series of short leaps backwards, and forwards, with an occasional whirl round, as if trying to defend themselves from an imaginary attack in the rear.

They sang a wild song, as fast and as loud as they could.

At length the dancing warriors became more excited, and flourished their cleavers, and leaped to and fro with all their might until it looked as if their eyes were on fire.

They worked themselves up into a state of temporary madness, and it was easy to believe that while in this condition, they would no more hesitate to cleave off a human head than they would to cut down a bamboo.

These creatures belonged to the tribe of the far-famed head-hunters, a race of which every traveller in the Eastern Archipelago has heard and trembled at their barbarous customs.

It is a custom with them, which has become a law, that every young man must, at least, cut off one human head before he can marry.

Heads, therefore, are in great demand.

Hunston was evidently a windfall for them, and they were rejoicing accordingly.

New heads must be obtained to celebrate such events as a birth, or a funeral, as well as a marriage.

One man, taller than the rest, had a necklace made of human teeth.

Small holes had been drilled in several score of teeth, which were strung on wire, long enough to pass three times round the neck of the hero who wore it.

Jack rightly supposed this to be the chief of the ferocious band.

On the piece of paper-like bark which hangs down in front, and which we have just described, the wearer makes a mark when he cuts off a head.

This mark was in the shape of a circle; and some had as many as ten or twelve of these circles, while others only had one or two.

When the dance was over, they all sat down and in-

dulged freely in an intoxicating liquor, made from the juice of the flowering part of a palm.

Then they began to dance again, and the chief tossed into their midst a human head, apparently not long severed from its trunk, for it was all smeared with clotted blood.

This they proceeded to kick wildly about as if it had been a football.

A sickening sensation, akin to fear, crept over Jack, as he lay hid, watching the awful carnival of those fiends.

"Very jolly sort of neighbours to have," muttered Jack. "I wonder what they are going to do with old Hunston? He don't look happy."

Nor did he.

As he was bound to the stake, Hunston's face had assumed an expression of utter and hopeless terror, and at times he closed his eyes as if he could not bear the hideous sight before him, and wished to shut it out.

It was clear that when Hunston gave way to his temper, and left his party, he had wandered about the island until he fell in with the natives, and was captured.

Perhaps he intended to return, and try and surprise Jack and Harvey again, and make them his slaves.

He was bad enough for anything.

However Jack was far too generous to allow his companion to perish.

He could not find it in his heart to leave him in the hands of the barbarians, whom he saw dancing around him, and celebrating a feast of blood.

When he was at Mr. Crawcour's academy, he had produced a singular effect upon everybody by his talent in ventriloquism.

It occurred to him now that if Mr. Crawcour and his masters could be startled by the exercise of this singular art, the savages were much more likely to be impressed by it.

No sooner had he imbibed the idea, than he determined to put it into execution.

It was true that he was armed with a double-barrelled breech-loading rifle, but he did not like to take life unnecessarily and without due provocation.

Besides the killing of one or two natives would only make the others more savage.

Blood for blood is a principle of the savages' creed. Suddenly throwing his voice into the air, he exclaimed—

"Hunston, old man, how do you find yourself?"

The effect of this speech was magical.

The savages stopped their war-dance, and looked up anxiously and inquiringly.

Neglected lay the head they had been kicking about.

But it was upon Hunston that the effect of the observation was most marked.

He recognized Jack's voice, and he knew he was a ventriloquist.

Just as the wretch reprieved on the scaffold may go from despair to hope, so did Hunston's face give up its blackness and assume a happier look.

"Keep up your pecker," continued Jack, "I'm not far off."

Hunston made no answer, but looked at the chief in a peculiar way.

Jack saw this significant look.

"He means something," he thought. "I must be careful."

For a time he remained silent.

When the natives had recovered from their astonishment, the chief, whose name was Banda Navia, called by his followers the Tuan Biza, or great chief, approached the captive.

Now Jack saw why Hunston had put on such a singular expression.

The Tuan Biza had, by meeting traders on the coast of Coram, whither he had been taken when young, picked up a knowledge of English, and Hunston was afraid Jack might say too much.

The suspicion of the Tuan Biza would be at once aroused if he heard any familiar phrases.

It was Jack's object to make him think that the great spirit was speaking.

All the savage tribes on these islands believe in a great spirit, and in witchcraft.

It was their well-known superstition that Jack hoped to play upon.

Speaking to Hunston, the chief said—

"Was that a spirit we heard?"

"Yes," answered Hunston, "it was my guardian angel."

"What did it say?"

"Listen. It will speak again."

Jack heard this conversation, and immediately exclaimed—

"Kill him not. If you do you will incur my vengeance."

"It says you are to spare my life," cried Hunston overpowered with joy.

The Tuan Biza translated this to the warriors, who seemed much concerned.

One of them, named Buru, who was famed for his cruel and wicked disposition stood forward and spoke.

"He is our captive," he said, pointing to Hunston, "and by our laws we are allowed to kill him. What is the spirit which forbids us doing so? One of our young men, Keyali, is about to be married and wants a head. It is not well that the captive should be spared."

Keyali, who had regarded Hunston as his special property, gave a grunt of approval.

"You hear what the spirit speaking from the clouds above our heads has declared," replied Tuan Biza.

Jack spoke again, and this time his voice was so near the chief as to make him start.

"If he is hurt," he exclaimed, "dread the fiery mountain, which shall cover you with stones and ashes. It does not please me that he shall die, as he is under my protection."

"Why, then, O spirit, did you let him fall into our hands?" asked the chief.

"Because, O Tuan Biza," replied Jack, giving the chief his title, "he had displeased me. It is the custom of some of your tribe to tattoo their skins, and I doubt not that you will find one of your number who understands the art. Let the captive, then, be pricked all over in curious devices, and marked with the juice of a nut."

The Tuan Biza turned to his friends, and related the order of the spirit, which seemed to please them immensely.

Hunston, however, did not relish the order at all.

"I say, Jack," he said, "don't for goodness' sake, tell them that. They'll do it. I shall be as ugly as a Red Indian."

"Serve you right," answered Jack, coolly. "You and I have had a score to pay off this ever so long."

"I'll tell them where the castle is, and make them come and fight you," continued Hunston.

"They'll get pepper if they do," Jack said; "and if you threaten me, I'll tell them I've changed my mind, and that interesting youth, Keyali, or whatever his name is, who is going to be married, and wants a head, according to custom, shall have yours."

"Jack, dear Jack," cried Hunston, "don't let them tattoo me. Fancy what I shall look like if I ever get back to England."

The Tuan Biza thought Hunston was saying his prayers, and beseeching the spirit to intercede for him.

"What you call your spirit? Is it Jack?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Hunston.

The chief informed the savages that the spirit who watched over the white man was called Jack, and they imbibed a great respect for the name at once.

"Tattoo him at once," said Jack.

The chief being thoroughly awed by the voice, ordered Hunston's clothes to be removed; and a sharp fish-bone was procured with which to puncture holes in the skin.

Into these the dark juice of a nut was to be squeezed, which would penetrate under the skin, and make the marks lasting.

"Will the spirit like him to be marked with birds and fishes?" asked the Tuan Biza.

"Birds, fishes and serpents," answered Jack, "with a parrot on each cheek and a small crocodile on the nose."

"I say, Jack," cried Hunston, again, "this won't do. I'd rather die. Fancy going about the Strand or Regent Street with a parrot on each cheek, and a small crocodile on the nose. Don't! I'll pay you out if you do."

"You've done all the malicious and beastly things to me you could do," replied Jack, "and I'm not a friend of you. Those who offend a greater power than themselves must pay the penalty. O Tuan Biza, you have found favour in our sight. Proceed at once with the—a—what do you call it?—tattooment."

The chief, Banda Navia, and Buru understood the art of tattooing, for they had travelled about the Archipelago, in prahus, or large boats, trading with nutmegs and

spices which grew in abundance on trees in the group of islands on which the "Fairy" was wrecked.

They had seen sailors do it, as well as remote tribes, and Banda Navia was not a bad artist.

Hunston was stripped naked to the waist.

The fish-bone was wielded by the chief, and its point proved as sharp as that of a needle, as if it had been rubbed on a stone.

Buru was prepared with the juice to make the stain when rubbed into the pricked skin.

The warriors began to sing and dance again, and determined to have some fun over this ceremony, if they could not have any over that of cutting off his head.

"Jack, Jack," cried Hunston, as the fish-bone began to describe circles over his face.

Jack remained obstinately silent.

"I'll say you're not a spirit, and it's all humbug," continued Hunston.

"Go it, my tulip," answered Jack, "they'll only cut off your head. It makes no odds to me particularly, but you're so jolly ugly as you are, I thought I'd have you beautified, and make you look pretty, that's all, my hearty."

Jack said this in his own voice, and from the thicket where he was concealed.

In a moment he saw his mistake.

The chief, who was a shrewd fellow, began to move in that direction.

There was danger of the trick being found out.

CHAPTER XIX.

HUNSTON IS TATTOOED.

FORTUNATELY Jack could see all that was going on.

His presence of mind did not desert him.

When the chief had reached the edge of the cleared space in which the savage rites were being celebrated, and was gaining Jack's hiding-place, the latter imitated the hiss of a snake.

This was done to perfection.

It seemed just under the foot of the Tuan Biza.

He started back with an expression of horror, and Jack shifted his position.

A large tree was close by, and he hid behind its trunk.

The Tuan Biza changed his mind, and did not search any further.

The natives proceeded with the process of tattooing, and as Hunston was tied to a stake, he was unable to offer any opposition.

After tattooing his face and nose, his back, chest, and sides were operated upon.

A stinging sensation like that produced by the bites of mosquitoes, assailed the victim of this cruel joke.

But it must be recollected that Hunston had done many things to make Jack his enemy.

He and Maple had actually tried to leave him and Harvey to drown in the sinking ship.

There is a limit to generosity, and, though Jack could be a good friend, he could be a good hater.

When the tattooement was completed, the chief, looking upward, said—

“O spirit, is it well?”

Hunston was writhing in agony.

He actually foamed at the mouth, not altogether through physical pain, but because he thought of the singular figure he should present ever afterwards.

There is no process which will affect tattooing. When the marks are once made with the point of anything sharp, and the dye, *if it is a lasting one*, rubbed in they last a man's lifetime.

“You have done well, O Tuan Biza,” replied Jack, still speaking from the air near the stake. “Keep the captive till the sun sets, and then release him.”

The chief bowed his head, for he was superstitious enough to think that when the snake hissed, it was a serpent sent by the spirit to sting him for listening to what Hunston had said.

At any other time Hunston would not have betrayed his companions.

Indeed he had been threatened with death by the savages, before Jack came up, because he would not tell how he came upon the island or how many companions he had.

This must be stated in his favour.

Now he was so maddened and furious at being tattooed that he felt no pity for any of his comrades.

"Let me go," he said, "and I'll tell you something worth knowing. I have companions on this island. We were wrecked here about a couple of months ago."

The Tuan Biza pricked up his ears, thinking he was going to hear something agreeable.

"How many?" he asked.

Hunston was about to reply when Jack, seeing the danger that threatened him, imitated his voice and made him say—

"Fifty-five."

The chief looked grave.

"There were four with me, but now there are only three," exclaimed Hunston.

"Just now you said fifty-five. Why do you say one thing one minute and then alter your number?" asked the Tuan Biza.

"It wasn't me; it's Jack," answered Hunston, driven wild with pain and annoyance.

The chief shook his head.

It was his opinion that Hunston was going mad.

Buru, the savage-minded native of whom we have spoken, approached with his cleaver and threatened the captive.

Speaking in his own language, he said that he and his companions were not satisfied with the conduct of the chief.

The captive had said that he and his companions wanted heads.

The Tuan Biza replied that the spirit had forbidden him to touch Hunston.

Buru made a derisive gesture and danced round contemptuously, cutting what we should call a caper.

He snapped his fingers in the air, and again threatened Hunston with the cleaver.

"Ugh!" he exclaimed, "what can the spirit do? Keyali, our young man, must have his head."

Keyali stepped forward, much elated at the turn affairs were taking.

"Beware!" thundered Jack. "Fire and smoke will come down from Heaven and consume you. Release the captive at sunset. Dare to touch a hair of his head and you will die."

Buru had been drinking rather too freely of the intoxicating liquor we have alluded to.

He snapped his fingers again, and led Keyali towards Hunston.

The other savages hung back.

Jack saw it was necessary to act.

Bringing his double-barrelled gun to a level with his shoulder, he prepared to fire.

It was not his object to kill either Buru or Keyali, as he wanted to make an example and strike terror into them.

So he aimed at Buru's leg, because he was the foremost in opposition, and the most ferocious-looking.

"Strike!" said Buru to Keyali.

At that moment Jack pulled the trigger.

Buru fell to the ground weltering in his blood.

Keyali ran away into the bush, and did not stop until he had gone some miles.

Then he sat down on the ground, and began to examine himself to see if he was hit.

The warriors were thunderstruck for a brief time, after which they chatted like a lot of monkeys.

Some examined Buru and bound up his wound, while others, headed by the Tuan Biza ran into the thicket from whence the smoke came.

But Jack was too quick for them.

Directly after firing, he had run away and hidden himself again at some distance.

They could find nothing, and their dismay was immense.

It was their firm belief that fire had come out of Heaven, as the spirit said it should.

From that instant Hunston's life was sacred in their eyes.

Even Buru would not have thought of harming him.

The wound inflicted upon the latter was situated in the thigh, and though painful, not dangerous, or necessarily fatal.

Feeling that he had saved Hunston's life, Jack hurried home to the castle, where he knew that Harvey must be waiting for him with the utmost impatience.

He had established a certain power over the natives; but he feared that since Hunston had told them there were other white people on the island, they would never rest until they had found them out.

Whether the savages lived at the extreme end of the

island, or had come to this particular one to celebrate some custom, he could not tell.

It was enough for him just then to have come up in the nick of time, and prevented Hunston from having his head cut off by Keyali.

The mention of head-cutting was conclusive in Jack's mind that the natives he had seen were the dreaded and far-famed head-hunters.

Tired and hungry, he reached the castle.

Harvey was on the look-out, rifle in hand.

"Hullo, Jack," he said; "I thought you never were coming back. Seen anything?"

"Yes," replied Jack.

"What?"

"Niggers."

"No! Have you really?" said Harvey, much excited. Have they got Hunston?"

"There's no mistake about that, they've got him hard and fast. It serves him right for playing tricks with us and being treacherous. If he hadn't given way to his temper, he'd have been all right."

"Will they eat him?"

"I don't think they are cannibals; they didn't look like it," answered Jack, "though they are ugly enough for anything. In my opinion they are a tribe or off-shoot of the Dyak head-hunters of Borneo, and nothing like nice neighbors."

"Didn't you try to save him?" asked Harvey.

"I did save him. As it happened I came up just at the time they were going to perform upon him, about a dozen of them. Such savage-looking beasts!"

"Why didn't you bring him with you?"

"You'll see him before long," said Jack, laughing, "and I'll bet you a sovereign, which, by-the-by, I could not pay if I lost, as we haven't got any money amongst us, that you won't know him."

"Why not?" replied Harvey.

"His own mother wouldn't know him. Ha! ha! ha!"

"What are you laughing at?"

"Never mind," said Jack, "I've payed Master Hunston out for all that he has done to me. You will know all about it soon enough. Give me some grub. I'm dead beat."

"I don't know what you'll have to eat," replied

Harvey ; "the ants have got into the biscuits, and there is nothing but the kegs of salt beef I have not opened."

"I'll tell you how to dodge the ants," answered Jack.

"How?"

"Put a saucer full of water under each leg of a table, and they can't get up. Look out! There's a parrot. Odds I pot him."

As he spoke Jack fired at a gaudy-plumaged bird, and brought it down.

"Put him in some hot water," he continued, "the feathers will come off, then clean him and cut him open. He'll do fine on the gridiron; or, look here, where's Maple? Make him do it."

"All right. Maple's civil enough. He's been on his knees, as one may say, ever since Hunston cut it!" replied Harvey.

"Here, you, Maple," cried Jack, "you're to be head cook and bottle washer; take this parrot, and get him ready for my dinner! If you are not slippery over it, I pity you."

Maple set to work with alacrity, and in a quarter of an hour Jack had a very good broil, for it must be recollected that they had saved from the wreck all the cooking utensils and things for use that they wanted.

What Harvey had said about the ants was quite true.

They were pests.

The little insects got into everything that was not protected.

If a bird was shot and laid down for an hour there would not be much of it left, and they ran up everything in swarms.

While Jack was having his dinner, Maple approached him and said—

"Is it true that Hunston has been caught by the savages?"

"Yes; and so will you if you don't watch it," answered Jack, with his mouth half full of broiled parrot.

"You won't give me to them, will you?"

"That depends upon how you behave yourself."

"I'll never do anything to offend you again," said Maple, with tears in his eyes, "and I'm glad now they've got Hunston, because he set me on against you all along. If they eat him it will only serve him right."

"Get out," exclaimed Jack in a tone of great disgust. "I hate you more now than I did before. You are a worse sneak than I thought you were.

"Why, Jack?" asked Maple.

"Don't call me 'Jack,'" replied he. "You and Hunston have been friends ever since you have known one another. You're as bad as he, and it's cowardly of you to let him down. Get up."

"Oh! if you've taken a spite against me, I can't help it," replied Maple, surlily.

Jack threw a biscuit at him, and he made his escape into the open air, looking more like a cowardly sneak than he usually did, and that is saying a great deal.

When Jack had satisfied his hunger, he called Harvey.

"You must keep a good look-out to-night," he exclaimed.

"Why more to-night than any other?" asked Harvey.

"I'll tell you why, Dick," answered Jack. "Those nead-hunting niggers have an idea that there are white people on the island, and they will search for them. That's for sartin, as the African observed, when he was told he'd be hanged for eating his grandmother."

Harvey laughed.

"It wouldn't be pleasant to wake up in the morning, and find our heads gone," Jack went on.

"If our heads were off, we shouldn't wake any more," Harvey said.

"Yes, we should; we should wake in another land," answered Jack, smiling. "Don't interrupt me. I'm tired, and you must watch til twelve; then call me. Let Maple sleep. We can't depend on the little varmint. If Hunston comes in, wake me at once, only don't take him for Tippto Saib in his war paint."

"I wish you'd tell me what has happened to Hunston," exclaimed Harvey.

"I won't spoil the fun. All I say is this. Hunston will be let go at sunset. I've worked the oracle so far, and I shan't say any more at present," replied Jack.

"I daresay it will keep," rejoined Harvey, in a tone of annoyance. "But about the natives? My only wonder is the beggars haven't found us out before. We've got quite a little farm about here."

"Yes; but we're in a sheltered nook, and they wouldn't spot us now if they didn't follow Hunston."

"You think they'll do that?"

"I don't think; I know it. Niggers all over the world are the dodgiest beasts out. So keep your swivel eye open."

"Never fear," replied Harvey. "I'm wide awake. They won't catch this weazel with both eyes shut."

Jack was satisfied with his answer, and though the sun had not yet set, lay down to rest.

The fatigue in the hot noontide he had gone through was enough to make any ordinary mortal sleepy.

And sleep he did, like a top that hums, for he snored loud enough to scare the mosquitoes away, as Harvey observed with a laugh to Maple.

CHAPTER XX.

TREACHERY IN THE CAMP.

MAPLE was thoroughly cowed in the absence of Hunston, and obeyed every command which was given him by Harvey without a word.

His evil, malevolent nature could only plot—he had not the courage to carry out his wicked designs.

Coming up to Harvey about sunset, while the latter, gun in hand, was keeping guard during Jack's sleep, as he sat down on the trunk of a fallen tree outside the castle, he said—

"Do you want me any more?"

"Yes," replied Harvey.

"What for?"

"That's nothing to you."

"But I should like to know. I've been weeding the corn all day, and I'm as tired as—as—help me to a simile."

"I shan't," answered Harvey. "If you can't find similes, go without them, or, if you must have one, say 'as sleepy as an ass,' which is what you are."

"You're always on to me," said Maple, with a subdued growl. "I suppose you think you can do as you like with me because you've got me on a desert island, and Hunston's sloped."

"It isn't deserted. Jack's seen savages."

"Has he? How many, and what are they like?" asked Maple, in surprise.

"You'll know in time. Hunston will be here soon."

"Will he? That's good news. He won't have me slave-driven. But what am I to do now?" Maple said, his face brightening at the news of Hunston's return.

"Skin a deer."

"Where is it?" Maple inquired, looking round.

"You'll see directly. I'm on the watch. The deer have been at the corn. They come about this time, and I mean to have a shot at one of the gentlemen," replied Harvey.

It was a lovely evening.

There was a constant changing of beautiful colors in the cloud that rested on the high mountain peaks in the south, while the day was fading into twilight, and the twilight in its turn subsiding into a fine, starlight night.

A little way off they could hear the sandpipers come and trip to and fro on the beach when the tide was full.

Many long-winged night-hawks swooped back and forth, feasting on multitudes of insects that came out as evening approached.

The deer of which Harvey spoke were most destructive.

They were accustomed to come into the prairie-lands in great droves, and frequently an area of a quarter of an acre was so completely rooted up by them that it looked as if it had been ploughed.

This was annoying, as the corn the boys had planted was making good progress under the fertilizing influence of the climate.

Presently there was the sound of hoofs clattering on the hard ground.

Harvey fired and brought down a fine deer.

He had learnt how to shoot, and having a quick eye, was as good a shot as Jack.

"Well shot," cried Maple. "You spotted him splendidly. It was stunning."

"It'll be more stunning when you've skinned him and cut him up. Take a sharp knife, and I'll make a cat gal-lows to hang the flesh on," replied Harvey.

Accordingly, he cut down a couple of sapplings, and placed them in the ground.

Over these he tied a horizontal bar.

Then he made a hole in the ground at the foot of each upright pole, and puddled the bottom with clay to make them hold water.

By this means he prevented the white ants climbing up the poles.

They would have eaten all the meat before morning if he had not adopted the plan of surrounding the sticks with water.

When the strips of fresh meat were hanging on the cross-bar, he lighted a fire underneath, and smoked them, placing a couple of steaks on the flames for his and Maple's supper.

"Not bad tackle this," observed Maple, as he cut into his steak. "Venison's fine when you've had nothing but salt junk and biscuit for a week."

While the boys were eating their supper there was a sound of footsteps.

Harvey sprang to his feet and shouldered his rifle.

"Fire! fire! It's a nigger," said Maple.

The intruder held up his hand, and said—

"Don't you know me?"

"I'll be hanged if I do," replied Maple; and yet it is—no, it can't be—yes, it is Hunston.

Hunston it was.

But how altered!

His face was haggard, and his eyes bloodshot.

Naked to the waist, as when the Indians let him go, in obedience to what they considered the command of a spirit, he appeared in all the grotesque horror of his recent tattooing.

His back presented a perfect nest of snakes, and a huge python coiled on his shoulders.

Parrots and other birds were represented on his chest and arms, while his stomach gave one a very good idea of a tiger crouching for his spring, and underneath all was a belt of fishes.

On each cheek was a parrot, and on his nose was a small crocodile.

He was smarting with the pain of the tattooing, and his skin presented an angry and inflamed appearance.

A more diabolical-looking object could not have startled his companions.

Maple began to laugh.

He could not have helped it.

"Why, Hunston, old man," exclaimed Harvey, joining in the merriment his condition excited, "what have they been doing to you? Is it paint?"

"I wish to goodness it was," answered Hunston, in a hollow voice, "then it would wash off, but now I'm marked for life."

"I must say you look pretty. "You're quite a work of art. I never saw such a picture. You ought to be tuffed and sent to the British Museum."

"I'll stuff you if you chaff me," answered Hunston. "Give me some of your grub. I'm very nearly starved."

"How did you get away?" asked Maple, putting a slice of deer meat on the fire.

"It was Jack's ventriloquism that did it," replied Hunston, with a groan.

"He funk'd the critters awfully, and there was one buffer, the Tuan Biza, or chief, who quite thought he was a spirit, but I wish he'd left me to die, I do. What good am I, pricked about like this? I'll have my revenge, though, see if I don't?"

Maple had been trying to smother his laughter, but he could not do so any longer.

"Ha, ha, ha! ho, ho, ho!" he broke out, ducking his head, and laughing till his sides shook.

"What are you grinning at, ugly?" cried Hunston, seizing him by the ear. "I'll give you something to howl at."

"Oh, don't, Hunston!" exclaimed Maple. "I couldn't help it. You look so comical."

Hunston dragged him to the fire, and bending him down by his superior strength put his head in the flames,

In a minute almost all his hair was singed off, and he would have been seriously burnt if Harvey had not pulled him away.

"Now you look comical, and I'll make you more so if you don't watch it," replied Hunston, savagely.

Maple did look funny without his hair, and retired to a distance, rubbing his scorched head and crying.

When Hunston had satisfied his hunger he was a little better tempered, and Harvey gave him a little bottle of wine which had been saved from the wreck.

"Stop that bellowing," he exclaimed, to Maple, who was still roaring.

"You can go to roost as soon as you like," said Harvey.

"How can I sleep with a singed head? It stings so," answered Maple.

"Go and get some grease, and rub it well in, and put on a sailor's cap," suggested Harvey.

"Your thatch will grow again," remarked Hunston, "while my beauty will never come back. My figure-head is ornamented for life, but I'll be one with Master Jack Harkaway."

Harvey did not like the persistent way in which he spoke of his cherished vengeance.

"Don't rile Jack too much," he said, "or he may wipe you out altogether."

"Two can play at that game," returned Hunston; "and you'd better keep out of it. I've no row with you at present."

"Your bad or good opinion doesn't matter much to me," answered Harvey carelessly.

"Doesn't it? We shall see. I'm desperate now, and if you quarrel with me, you'll find it no bottle, as the sailors say; so shut up before there's any harm done!" Hunston exclaimed threateningly.

"Why can't you live on friendly terms with us?" asked Harvey. "I am sure we ought to be more friendly than ever in our lonely position, with all sorts of dangers staring us in the face."

"You'll have enough of them soon," said Hunston, significantly; "and you should have more sense than to suppose that I can ever be jolly with any of you after this."

He pointed to his face.

"Jack did not do it."

"He told the savages to do it, which comes to the same thing."

"At the same time he saved your life, which you did not deserve."

"What's the use of my life to me?" asked Hunston. "I can never return to a civilized country with a face like this. I tell you he has just made me desperate, that's all."

"Did you not try to drown Jack, and I, and poor Mr. Mole when the 'Fairy' was abandoned?"

Hunston was silent.

"If you want to argue, you shall have enough of it," continued Harvey. "I suppose Jack thought you were only good enough to live among savages. It's what your bad disposition has brought you to."

"You'd look foolish if I brought the savages down on you," remarked Hunston.

"What good would that do you?" asked Harvey.

"We are your friends, are we not? At least we are as friendly as you will let us be. The fact is, you were always a bad fellow, and I don't blame Jack for what he's done. But there may be hope for you yet."

"What hope?" cried Hunston.

"All the tattooing I have seen on board ship has been done with Indian ink, which won't come out."

"Well?"

"Suppose the dye of the berry the savages used is not lasting."

Hunston's face grew positively radiant at this suggestion.

"God grant what you suggest may be true. It sounds too good, however. A week or two will show. It's kind of you, Harvey, to try to comfort me. I thought you all hated me."

"Jack doesn't hate you in his heart. He's not the sort of fellow to hate anyone; only remember your last attempt to take the command here and make us your slaves. You can't be trusted—you are so treacherous and evilly disposed."

"Jack had best look out."

"I wonder you don't feel grateful to him for saving you," Harvey said. "I'm not exactly a pious sort of a fellow, as you know, though I try to steer clear of anything wrong, and——"

"Ah, yes, I daresay!" sneered Hunston. "You're one of those saints who carry a Bible in their pockets."

"I have got a Bible, I am thankful to say in my pocket. It was my mother's last gift, and I find a good deal of comfort in it, now and then, though I am sorry that I don't read it so much as I ought."

"You have got one?"

"Yes, and I'm not ashamed of it," replied Harvey, resolutely. "But what I was going to say is this——"

"I shall slip my cable and sleep in the woods if you are going to preach."

"Only a word or two. Don't you think you are better here with us than if you had been killed, and sent as you are to be judged? One ought to pay a little attention to these things."

"Oh, don't bother me?" answered Hunston, uneasily. "I want to be quiet and think."

Harvey said no more.

As he watched Hunston doze, after his dinner, he fancied his face assumed a villainous expression.

Bad thoughts were evidently lurking in his mind.

Of course the tattooing disfigured him, and made him look repulsive and even ferocious, though there was a comical side to that also.

"I must warn Jack," muttered Harvey. "There is something in the beggar's look which I don't like. If he does not mean mischief, I can't read faces."

Full of thought, he paced up and down, keeping a good look-out, and breathing with more ease, now a cool current of air, such as the evening brings, took the place of the garish light of day and its sultry atmosphere.

CHAPTER XXI.

JUST IN TIME.

HUNSTON, who was thoroughly exhausted, fell asleep.

The wind, in heavy gusts, sighed through the dense foliage over his head, while in the distance rose the deep, pulsating roar of the ocean surf.

Inland was a deep ravine, and from its furthestmost recesses rolled out the reverberating, moaning cries of monkeys, who all the night long kept up a piteous calling, each answering his fellows in the same mournful tones.

Hunston's dreams were not pleasant.

A storm was coming on, to avoid which Harvey entered the castle, still on the look-out.

At midnight a troubled dream disturbed the rest of Hunston.

An indefinite horror thrilled along his veins as he fancied for a moment that he was whirling round and round a deep yawning maelstrom.

Then a change occurred, but scarcely one for the better.

He fancied he was fixed in the midst of a water-spout, and in his struggles to escape, awoke to find that a great stream of water was pouring down upon him from the leaves of a palm under which he was sleeping.

A heavy shower had come on.

Getting up, he went to the house the boys had built, and was about to enter, when he was stopped by Harvey.

"You can't come inside," said the latter.

"Why not? Do you want me to catch rheumatism out in the wet?" answered Hunston.

"I'll ask Harkaway. It's time to call him; but the fact is, after the threats you used, I am afraid of you."

"I shan't hurt you," said Hunston, with a laugh. "It would be easy enough, if I felt inclined. What's to prevent me from cutting your throat like a rabbit?"

Harvey shuddered.

Hunston spoke in such a cold-blooded way, that he feared him more than ever; but, touching his gun, he exclaimed—

"Only this, my boy. This will stop you."

"Let me in to-night, and I'll cut the shop to-morrow," Hunston said, pleadingly. "I shall be better off with the savages."

Harvey woke Jack, saying—

"It's your turn to watch now. I am pretty well done up."

"Has Hunston come back?" asked Jack springing up.

"Yes; he's at the door. It's pelting with rain. Shall he come in?"

"Oh, yes, let the poor beast in."

"Be on the look-out. He's in a nice state of mind, I can tell you."

"Is he? Well, it isn't to be wondered at. What does he look like?" asked Jack, with a grin.

"Beautiful. He's a sort of cross between a zebra and a chimpanzee with the measles."

Hunston stepped forward.

He had heard this remark, and he exclaimed—

“What are you? I should call you a cross between a laughing jackass and a baboon, with a dash of Tom Fool in you.”

“Look here! stash that sort of thing,” cried Jack. “I’m cock here. You must not cheek Harvey.”

“Why can’t he let me alone?”

“It’s his playful nature. He is not savage like you.”

“Enough to make me savage. Look at my face,” growled Hunston.

“I will in the morning, when there’s more light; at present our lamp is rather dim. But you ought to feel flattered at the delicate attention the natives have paid you.”

“Why?”

“Because, when you get back to England, if you ever do, you need not be hard up,” answered Jack. “All you’ve got to do is to hire yourself out to some cove with a caravan, and he can take you round the country and show you, at a penny a head, as the ‘wild man of the Unknown Islands, by nature painted as you see him, born with a parrot on each cheek, and a small crocodile on the nose. Walk up, ladies and gentlemen, walk up; only a penny. Positively only a brown to see this wonderful natural phenomenon.’ Then will come a touch of the big drum, and the coppers will roll in like a steam. Tie a sheepskin round your waist, and you’ll draw. Your fortune’s as good as made.”

“Go on,” said Hunston. “It pleases you, and it doesn’t hurt me.”

“Or you might be advertised as the marvellous man monkey, ornamental if not useful.”

“I shan’t answer you. I’m going to pitch in the corner. My unfortunate nut aches fit to split,” Hunston observed.

“Behold him, ladies and gentlemen, but at the same time beware,” Jack went on, “for he takes the most lovely maidens into the topmost branches of the highest trees, regardless of their piteous cries, and the agonized entreaties of their frenzied relatives.”

“Shut up, you fool!” cried Hunston, who could not keep his temper.

"I'm only doing the showman," Jack answered.

"You might let a fellow get a few winks of sleep after all he has gone through."

"All right. Dick be quiet. The pictorial ape sleeps."

Hunston pretended to snore, but he did not go to sleep.

He was watching his opportunity, which came sooner than he expected.

Harvey threw himself down, and also made him believe that he was worn out and wanted rest.

But he distrusted Hunston and determined to watch him.

Only the humming of the night birds and insects, with the occasional hiss of a snake, and the wild and horrid noise made by some wild beast in the jungle, broke the silence of the night.

The rain had cleared up as suddenly as it had come on.

Jack took a peep outside, standing half in, and half out of the doorway.

The rain that had fallen rose again in thick heavy vapour from the hot ground.

Knowing that this very often gave rise to fevers, Jack did not venture out.

Hunston had not taken his snake-like eyes off him.

Seeing his back turned, he rose on his hands and knees.

Opening his clasp knife, he placed it between his teeth, and crawled stealthily towards his victim.

In an instant Harvey was after him.

Just as he started up in the dim mist of that tropical night to plunge his knife into the back of Harkaway, who was totally unsuspecting of his intention, Harvey was upon him.

Throwing his arms round his neck, he put on a hug that nearly strangled him.

He fell on his back on the floor of the hut, and Harvey placed his knee on his chest.

"Would you?" he said.

"What's the shine, Dick?" asked Jack, turning round.

"Can't you see?"

"I can't make out exactly."

"It would have been all up the Baltic with you in a brace of shakes if I hadn't guessed what his game was and watched him. He'd got a knife to stab you with."

"Had he, by jingo?" replied Jack, who now began to realise the narrow escape he had had.

Hunston glanced sullenly and defiantly at them.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN UGLY FIX.

PRESENTLY Jack spoke.

"I'll tell you what it is, old man," he exclaimed, "if you play tricks with me, it's either your life or mine, and as king of this island, I shall have to try you by court-martial, and let the daylight into you with an ounce of lead."

"I didn't mean anything," answered Hunston, cowering before him.

"What had you a knife for?"

"You see, I was dreaming, and walked in my sleep."

"It won't wash," said Jack.

"What I've gone through upset my mind. I thought I was going to attack one of the natives, and make my escape."

"It isn't good enough," continued Jack.

"Don't you believe me?"

"Not by a long way. You're a bad lot, Mr. Hunston, and you'll have to make tracks."

"What?"

"Walk your chalks!"

"You won't send me away! How can I live unarmed, in the open?" pleaded Hunston.

"You stepped it of your own accord a little while ago, and now you'll hook it to please me."

"That was temper. I meant to come back, only the natives copped me," replied Hunston. "Come, Jack, make it up. I swear I didn't mean any harm. You were always more generous to me than I deserved. Don't kick me out like a dog. There are wild beasts on the islands, and I saw snakes. These are not nice companions, let alone the head-hunting natives."

"It's your own fault."

"Don't be hard on me," continued Hunston.

"I'll leave it till the morning, and then we'll decide what's to be done with you," replied Jack. "It's beastly to think there is treachery in the camp. I don't like it."

"I know what that means," said Hunston, gloomily. "You'll let me be quiet till the morning, and then you'll shunt me. If I go by myself on this island I must croak, you know that."

"No, I don't. Forage for yourself."

"You don't seem to see exactly what you are doing," Hunston said. "But I'll tell you if Harvey will let me go."

"Let him get up, Dick," said Jack.

Hunston rose and shook himself, like a Newfoundland dog on getting out of the water.

"Go ahead," continued Jack. "I'm so far up to you, that you don't perform on me. I'm wide awake enough."

"If you send me away, you drive me into the hands of the natives. They won't kill me now, because they consider me under the protection of a spirit, and they will be glad enough to have me when I tell them who the spirit is, and what a nice, little, well-stored crib he's got here."

"You're villain enough for anything," exclaimed Jack.

"If I'm driven to it."

"Were you driven to trying to annoy me at school, or to drown me on board ship, or to make yourself master here, or to go in for stabbing me to-night?" said Jack, looking pointedly at him.

"Let the past drop. I'm talking about what you're driving me to now," answered Hunston.

"You double-distilled ass," exclaimed Jack, impatiently. "Do you think I can't see through you?"

"I don't want to be master," Hunston continued.

"But I don't see why a fellow with my experience, who has made more than one voyage, should be put on the shelf, because you choose to make a favourite of Harvey."

"Dick and I are old chums. Dick is a gentleman, which is what you never were, and never will be."

"His father's only a clerk, a half-and-half City banking Clerk, and my father has got his own property," Hunston said.

"I'm talking about the man himself, and not about fathers," replied Jack. "I say Dick's an old pal of mine, and he has always gone straight, which you have not, and that's why I made him my lieutenant."

"Won't you trust me?"

"I can't. If you were to go down on your knees, and take all the oaths you ever knew, I shouldn't feel any more comfortable with you in the place, than I should with a young cobra copella between my ship's blankets."

Hunston looked foolish.

"You asked me for it, and now you've got it," Jack went on.

"Then you'd rather have me as an enemy," said Hunston.

"What are you now?"

"Willing to be your friend."

To Hunston's offer of friendship Jack simply replied—

"Bosh! over the left."

"All right, my hearty. It don't make much difference to me," cried Hunston. "If I can't have your friendship, I'll have——"

"What?" asked Jack, as he hesitated.

"*Your head*," replied Hunston.

Jack and Harvey regarded him with amazement.

Was he going to make another attack upon them?

What did he mean? Jack scarcely knew how to deal with Hunston.

He was in a sort of fix.

Hunston was not slow in taking advantage of the impression that he had made upon Jack.

"I suppose you know," he went on, "that the natives you saw to-day are head-hunters?"

"Yes. I gathered as much as that," answered Jack.

"Very well, then we can sail fair," continued Hunston, who stooped down to repossess himself of his knife.

"Am I to go?"

"How can I keep you here, when you are always trying to prod me with knives, and won't knock under?"

"I never did, and never will. The man isn't born whom I shall call master."

"But don't you know," exclaimed Jack, "that even the savages have a chief? There must be some head to keep things in working order. What is it you want?"

"My idea is that of a republic. One man's as good as another. Let us live like brothers, and share and share alike."

"Yes," Harvey said, derisively, "a nice brother you'd

make. If you had the key of the spirit chest, you'd be as tight as a drum in an hour."

"A good job, too," replied Hunston. "But don't you put your say in. I'm talking to your master."

"Who's that?"

"Harkaway; didn't he say he was king? Very well. If he is, of course he's your master as well as mine, though that's not what I'm driving at. I'm to go, that's flat. I don't care much, for I shall go to the natives and make terms with them. They will plan an attack on you here, and I shall show them the way, so you know what you've got to expect."

"That's a nice return for all our kindness," observed Jack.

"Kindness," repeated Hunston, scornfully.

"I don't see that we have treated you badly."

"Oh, don't you? I'm sorry for you then."

"You have tried more than once to take away my life, and I suppose you know that is murder," exclaimed Jack, severely. "If you were at home you would be tried and hanged for it."

"Hanged for killing a thing like you!"

"Never mind what I am. You need not be so cocky. I could shoot you now and be justified in doing so," Jack said colouring.

"Why?"

"Simply because you have basely and treacherously tried to take away a life you cannot give back again. You're like a dog that bites the hand that feeds it."

"Well, I'm off. My name's Walker, and I can see the sooner I slope out of this caboose the better. It won't take me long to find better diggings. Will you give me a gun and some powder and shot?" said Hunston.

"Not likely," answered Jack, "you don't take me for such a flat, do you? I may be green, I know I am green in some things, but I'm not so jolly thundering green as all that."

"I only want to shoot something."

"Somebody you mean, and that somebody is myself. No, thank you. When I'm tired of my life, I'll make you a present of our best double-barrelled, but not before."

"I meant I wanted to kill something to live upon," said Hunston, looking confused.

"Over the left," remarked Harvey.

"Join your friends the niggers. You're worth your grub to them; they'll board and lodge you," replied Jack.

"I may not find them at once."

"Why not?"

"They don't live here," replied Hunston, becoming confidential. "This is a desert island, with no inhabitants except ourselves. They came over in proas or long boats."

"How do you know that?" queried Jack, who was much interested in this announcement.

"I heard the Tuan Biza talking, and asked him a lot of questions. They call this Pulo Kapul or Ship Island, because it is a dangerous coast, and ships have, been wrecked here before."

"What did they come here for?"

"For a spree, I suppose. There was some ceremony on, and it was a sort of excursion," answered Hunston.

"I don't understand the habits of the beggars," exclaimed Jack. "But are you sure you are not humbugging us?"

"No, I'm not really. I tell you the truth. The natives you saw came from some distance. They had, as far as I can ascertain, boarded an English merchant vessel, for they are awful pirates, and they had killed all the passengers and crew except a young girl, whom they led captive to their town or village."

"An English girl?" asked Jack, his face flushing indignantly.

"Yes."

"Well, cut along, Hunston," Jack said; "you can't stop here until you get better ideas, I won't say into your head, but into your heart; that's where you are wrong, old boy."

"Good-bye," muttered Hunston, as Harvey left the doorway to make room for him to pass.

"I'll tell you one thing," Jack went on, "if you come back ready and willing to make one of us, I shall always be glad to forget what's happened. I can't say more than that, can I?"

Hunston was silent.

"Can I, Dick?" repeated Jack.

"I'm sure you can't," replied Harvey.

"Oh, yes," sneered Hunston, "you want to be a couple of jolly good-natured fellows, don't you? That sort of lingo is only meant to glorify yourselves, and make me look small."

"I won't waste any further words with you," Jack said, in a tone of annoyance. "Clear out."

He stood on one side, and Hunston quitted the castle in the grey dawn of the early morning, and was soon lost to sight in the distance.

"A good riddance," remarked Jack.

"Yes, he's useless; and I suppose I can take my forty winks now," replied Harvey.

Jack replied in the affirmative, and walked up and down outside the castle, gun in hand, so as to be ready in the event of a surprise.

He thought over his present position, and thoughts of home came into his mind.

Would he ever see his home again?

Surrounded on all sides by peril, it was extremely doubtful, but he kept a good heart and did not despair.

Thinking of what Hunston had told him about the wreck of an English ship on a neighboring island, and the capture of a young lady by the natives, caused his thoughts to turn to Emily.

It was pleasant to think that she was happy with her friends.

To know that the natives had only visited his island was consoling, because they were not so likely to attack him.

What would Hunston do?

He had, in his bullying, blustering way, threatened to make friends with the natives if he fell in with them again.

Very likely he might be able to effect an union with them.

And flushed with the hope of plunder as well as human heads, they would not be a force to be despised.

Yet he could not blame himself for letting Hunston go away.

While in the castle, he was always plotting against Jack and seeking his life.

He was his enemy anyhow.

All Jack could do was to be always on the watch.

He resolved that he would go out the next day and once

more explore the island, so as to see if the savages were still upon it.

In his belt he placed pistols and knives, and over his shoulder he carried his breech-loading gun.

When Harvey heard his intention, he begged to be allowed to accompany him.

This he could not agree to, as it would not have been safe to leave the castle in the charge of Maple.

So Jack started alone.

Having set off before the heat of the day came on, Jack, in about three hours, had done his ten miles.

He passed several lakes, fringed with ferns ; hot, sulphurous fumes exhaled from them.

On one was a flock of wild birds, which he longed to have a shot at, but did not deem it prudent, as he might give an indication of his presence to enemies.

Occasionally he came across springs and pools of steaming, boiling water, showing the volcanic nature of the ground for miles near the burning mountain.

A range of hills rose up before him, and from these descended a variety of streams which formed themselves into a river.

This gradually increased in size and volume till it reached the sea.

It was magnificently wooded on both sides, and, as Jack stood on the bank and gazed up and down, he thought what a lovely place it would be to come and fish in.

Vines, shrubs, and large trees, were mingled together, while gaudy-plumaged birds disported themselves in the dense foliage.

Even a photograph could scarcely convey a correct and adequate idea of the magnificence of the scenery.

Being hot and tired, Jack made up his mind to have a bath.

For a moment he forgot that there might be dangerous reptiles in the river.

The water looked so cool and tempting that he could not resist it.

Laying down his gun, pistols and knives, he took off his clothes, and selecting a good place on the bank to jump off from, plunged in with a header.

He came up with the sparkling water bubbling over his head.

"This is jolly," he exclaimed. "I wish old Harvey was here. How he would enjoy it."

And he struck out to cross the river, the stream of which was not very strong. He had not gone more than a dozen yards before he heard a shouting behind him.

Turning round he saw three men.

A glance seemed to show him that they were savages.

They gesticulated and held up their hands in which were spears, as if to arrest his attention.

Luckily he had taken the precaution to hide his weapons and clothes under a carraway tree, the long, needle-like leaves of which effectually protected and concealed them.

It seemed as if the natives were telling him to come back.

"Thank you," muttered Jack to himself, "I'd rather not. I've no doubt you're very nice when one knows you, but I've no desire to have the pleasure of your acquaintance, we'll postpone the honour."

His intention was to swim to the opposite bank and make his escape.

He could return for his gun and clothes when they were gone.

Anything was better than falling into their hands.

The noise made by the natives redoubled.

"What a row the varmints are kicking up," Jack said, wondering what they meant.

He was very soon to find out.

Suddenly he saw something in the water ahead of him.

Something ugly and scaly, like the head of a monster in a pantomime.

A thing with dull eyes, but big jaw, which he knew in an instant belonged to a crocodile.

It was between him and the shore.

Behind him were the natives.

It was death to retreat, and it looked very much like death to advance or stay where he was.

Jack's blood turned cold, and he felt as if the water, which he had hitherto thought temperate, had become icy.

"I'm a gone coon," he said to himself; "either the crocodile or the niggers must have me, and it's odds on the croc."

It was certainly an awkward meeting, and showed the

danger of bathing in a river in the tropics. What was he to do !

Jack had not the remotest idea.

He stared at the crocodile, and the repulsive brute glared back again at him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FEAST OF THE CANNIBALS.

"Yes," continued Jack to himself, "I'll back the fish. It's long odds on the scaly monster of the deep."

But in spite of his apparent levity, he was very much alarmed.

His position seemed a hopeless one.

He was afraid to move much, and kept treading water and floating gently down the stream.

If he moved he had an idea that the crocodile would at once make a dive at him.

All at once he heard something whizz past his ear.

A short stick floated on the water near him, and he fancied that the natives were shooting arrows at him, and trying to kill him.

"That's coming it too strong," he muttered. "It's getting hot now and no mistake."

Another and another of these short sticks fell close to him, and Jack grasped one remarking that it was sharpened at both ends, and seemed to be cut from a very hard sort of wood.

This action of his may have roused the crocodile, who was of average size, for the monster moved towards Jack.

His huge jaws opened, and the formidable teeth he possessed became visible.

"God help me," cried Jack, as the beast rushed at him. "It's all over now. Good-bye to everybody and everything. I should have liked a better grave than that beast's stomach."

The instinct of self-preservation was very strong within him.

Scarcely knowing why he did so, he put out his hand. In it was the short stick shot at him by the natives.

This he thrust into the crocodile's mouth quite suddenly.

His jaws tried to close, to bite off the boys appetising arm, but they shut on the sharp edges of the hard stick.

Unable to open or shut his mouth, the creature lashed the water into foam.

The natives had been very quiet for a time.

Now they set up a shout.

This led Jack to believe that they had purposely sent him the sharpened sticks, and not with the intention of injuring him.

Whether their intention was friendly or not he could not tell.

Perhaps they wanted to eat him themselves, and did not like the idea of a crocodile having such a tit-bit all to itself.

"They may be friendly, and they may be t'other. Very much t'other, I should suspect," thought Jack. "However, I shan't give them the chance of chawing up this child."

Anxious to get out of the water as soon as possible, he swam with quick stroke to the opposite bank to that on which the natives were standing.

The crocodile followed him, though it was as inoffensive as a lamb now.

Once on the shore, Jack sank on his knees and thanked Heaven.

Then he took up a stone and threw it at the crocodile, upon which it made no impression.

"The brute's like a hog in armour," remarked Jack.

He ran for some distance, but finding the heat of the sun inconvenient, he climbed up a tree and hid himself among the thick leaves.

Here he remained until the sun's power decreased.

He was so delighted at his escape from the dangers that had menaced him, that he did not care much for such little evils as being scorched by the sun, or parched with thirst.

When he could conveniently do so, he intended to seek a place near the river's source, where he could ford the stream.

Nothing would have induced him to swim across the water again.

To be face to face, when bathing, with a crocodile, is quite enough once in a lifetime.

He learnt afterwards that it was not at all an unusual thing for the natives to thrust sharp-pointed sticks into the monster's jaws, and so render him incapable of closing them.

That some natives still lingered on the island he had no doubt.

On dry land, and armed, he did not fear them.

It appeared, from what he learnt subsequently, that when they saw him in the water, they took him to be one of their own party.

Their shooting the sticks with their bows towards him was no proof of their friendliness to him.

Perhaps they were not a little surprised when they saw him get out of the water, with his white skin shining in the sun.

In time Jack descended from the tree, and made his way, as well as he could with his naked feet, along the river bank.

He found a ford, about two miles further up, crossed, and went towards the spot where he had left his clothes.

To his joy, he discovered them just as he had left them.

It did not take him long to dress, and with his gun and pistols, he felt himself a man once more.

It was time to get back, so he started on the homeward journey, not having done much that day.

That the island was larger than he had imagined he had found out, as well as that it had a water-shed from a range of hills of some importance.

In addition to this, the natives had not yet gone away.

There was a source of danger in this fact, for if Hunston was as good as his word, and made friends with these savages, he might at any moment lead them against his former companions.

While thinking of the dangers ahead, Jack stopped abruptly.

A wild sound fell upon his ears, which he knew from his experience of the day before, was the festival chant of the nation.

Approaching very cautiously, he saw that he had arrived at the spot where the savages had been singing joy songs over the capture of Hunston.

Had they got him again?

A glance sufficed to show him that the victim tied to the bamboo stake was not Hunston, nor did he see any trace of that young gentleman.

Fascinated by the expectation of some horrible spectacle, Jack halted, being well concealed, and looked on.

"Here's the show gratis for nothing, and I don't see why I shouldn't peep at it," was Jack's remark.

A sharpened prop was placed under the prisoner's chin, so that he could not move his head.

One look at the wretched man's face proved conclusively that he had given up all hope of life.

It was possible to read nothing there but blank, hopeless despair.

Presently the barbaric chant ended.

The Tuan Biza stepped forward with a large, sharp knife in his hand.

As the chief, it was his privilege to cut out of the living victim any piece he liked best.

The parts of the human body which are esteemed the greatest delicacies by these cannibals are first, the palms of the hands, and then the eyes.

When the chief has gratified his choice the others are entitled in turn to advance and cut out bits.

The savage feast proceeded quickly, and the victim's shrieks and moans were pitiful to hear.*

Jack ground his teeth with rage, but on looking to his rifle, found that he had lost the percussion cap off the nipple, and had not another with him. Besides the man might have been a criminal for what he knew.

It was evident that those men did not eat human flesh for lack of animal food.

Abundance of game was to be met with, as Jack knew.

They indulged their appetites in this beastly manner because they liked it.

It was a very long time before Jack got the sight of the hacked and bleeding form from his eyes.

Sick at heart, and faint, he glided away from the spot, and struck out for home.

When he reached the castle, he related his adventures

* For confirmation of this revolting custom, refer to Bickmore's and Pfeiffer's travels among the Battas of the East Indian Archipelago.

to Harvey, who listened with increasing horror at each fresh detail.

Maple was equally impressed.

"I'm glad you got away from the crocodile," said Maple. "But it would have been worse to fall in with the natives. Do you think they would eat us?"

"Yes, like a shot," answered Jack. "But I don't mean to give them the chance."

"Will they attack us?" said Harvey, "that is the question."

"Yes, a hundred to one on it," answered Jack. "Hunston will make his peace with, and become one of, them, solely by promising them the plunder of our castle, and the enjoyment of our bodies. I don't expect him to-night, though we shall not be safe from one hour to the other."

"Let me watch, Jack," exclaimed Maple, "and give me a gun. I'm sure I can shoot."

"I can't trust you," replied Jack.

"Not when our lives are in danger? I should not, for my own sake, let the natives capture us."

"Yes, you might if Hunston got hold of you, and promised you your own life. That's what it is to have a bad character," Jack continued. "You might in this crisis help us a great deal, but we know what you are; so, while Harvey and I do the watching and fighting you must be the indoor servant, Sally the housemaid, and Polly the cook, rolled into one; so set about your business at once, and let me have some dried venison and something to drink."

Maple slunk away, ashamed of himself, and annoyed at not being allowed to act the part of a man.

It was his own fault, however, and he had only himself to thank for it.

"You're dull, Jack," observed Harvey, pouring him out a glass of wine.

"My nerves are a little shaken," answered Jack, drinking the wine at a draught.

"No wonder."

"And I've got an idea that stirring events are going to happen."

"I wish a ship would come and take us away," said Harvey, with a sigh, as he thought of home.

"So do I, but I don't know that I should go in her," replied Jack.

"Why not?" asked Harvey, in surprise.

"You heard what Hunston said about a ship being wrecked on another island?"

"Yes."

"And an English girl being saved?" continued Jack.

"And taken into the interior as a captive or slave or something," said Harvey.

"That was it," replied Jack, adding, "well, I want to save that girl, and bring her away with me; and I shouldn't consider myself a man, or be happy all my life, if I had the chance of going away, and did not make something more than an effort to rescue that English girl."

"By Jove! you're right, Jack. I always said you were a fine fellow," cried Harvey, his face speaking the admiration he felt.

Involuntarily the boy's hands met in a cordial grasp.

It was a silent compact between them to save their fair and unfortunate countrywoman at all hazards.

CHAPTER XXIV.

KEPT IN SUSPENSE.

A FEW days passed without bringing any cause of alarm to the castaways.

Jack did not decrease in vigilance.

He and Harvey kept a good look-out, distrusting Maple, who was treated as their drudge, for they knew his deceitful nature, and feared lest he might in some way be in communication with Hunston.

The captain's dog, Nero, of which we have spoken, was tied up outside the castle, so that he might give notice of the approach of any foe.

He would not bark at any of the boys, and not knowing what Hunston's real character was, he rather liked him in return for meat and biscuits he had given him, but the slightest tread of a strange footstep would make his loud bark resound through the woods.

"I wish I knew the worst," Jack remarked to his friend. "If Hunston is going to lead the natives to attack us, he might do it and get the thing over."

"Perhaps he's not so bad as we think him, and will change his mind," answered Harvey.

"Not he," said Jack, with a shake of the head. "I know him of old. He only cares for himself. He would like to be king of the savages and have all our stores and firearms, but he hasn't got them yet."

"That reminds me of an idea I had," said Harvey.

"Out with it then; don't be afraid of it."

"If we were attacked it would be from the clearing we've made, as the enemy could act more compactly together. My idea is to load, say twenty guns, and fix them nearly all together so that we could tie a string to the triggers, pull it and fire a volley, which would kill the lot."

"All right," said Jack. "I loaded about thirty guns yesterday, and put them in a corner, so that I could take up one after another and let fly at the niggers on the principle of one down, t'other come on."

This idea of Harvey's was adopted, and a formidable battery erected in a few hours.

The boys felt more comfortable when they had taken every precaution against a surprise that prudence suggested.

"Some of these guns are oldish. I hope they won't 'bust' up," remarked Jack, with a smile.

"If you think that," answered Harvey, regarding the battery fondly, "let's make Maple pull the string. If he was blown into little bits and smithereens, he wouldn't be much loss."

"I should like to take a stroll and see what is going on," Jack said, anxiously.

"You mustn't venture a yard from the castle, Jack," cried Harvey. "I won't have it. Our only chance is in the bundle-of-sticks dodge. We must hang together. How do you know that we are not being watched now from some bush, and that your departure on a stroll would be the signal for a rush in and a surprise of the place. It makes my hair curl to think of it."

"All right. I won't leave you," Jack replied, "though this continued suspense is not at all to my liking. Per-

haps the natives have left the island, their game of jinks being over, and Hunston can't find them."

"No," said Harvey, thoughtfully. "He's found them. If he hadn't, he'd have been back. How could he live without arms to kill birds and things? He's met with them, and is getting something up for us."

"He'll meet with a hot reception. Our guns will astonish the weak nerves of his new friends."

"That's what he's afraid of. He wants to catch us napping."

"Don't he wish he may get it?" answered Jack, adding, "I say, Dick, have you noticed those fine birds that look like pheasants—the beggars that eat our corn up! Look at them now; they're wiring in like steam. Here, Maple, you little humbug, why don't you go and bird-flap? It's all you're fit for."

"They won't go away," replied Maple, who was hoeing the weeds out of some potatoes that had just begun to sprout.

"You've only got to show your ugly mug and they'll have fits," replied Jack. "Whistle, howl, do something. Give them a 'lul-li-e-ty' like that we used to wake old Crawcour up with, and drive Mole mad on the winter evenings at Lillie Bridge."

"I wish I was back there again," said Maple, almost tearfully.

"You ungrateful little viper," exclaimed Jack sarcastically. "Do you mean to say that you don't appreciate the honour of being head-cook and bottle-washer to King Harkaway and Duke Harvey, his prime minister, home secretary, and all the rest of it."

"Duke Humbug," muttered Maple.

"What's that you say?" asked Harvey. "I'll give you something, my fine fellow. Come here and do homage. Come on."

"Do what?" said Maple, laying down his hoe and advancing.

"Do homage. Kneel on both knees, and put my feet on your head in token of submission. You won't? Lend me that stick, an' it please your most gracious majesty. I must welt this disobedient subject."

Jack handed him a stick he carried in his hand, and laughed heartily.

"Lamm in to him," he said.

"Oh, don't hit me, Harvey," roared Maple. "I'm sore all over from the last hiding you gave me. I'll do homage or any other rot you like."

Accordingly Harvey refrained, and Maple, kneeling down, put his head under the prime minister's feet, and was afterwards allowed to resume his work.

"That will teach you not to be cheeky," observed Harvey. "We don't allow any Radicals here."

Maple gave him a spiteful look, and went to the corn-fields to drive away the gaudy-plumaged birds that were making such sad havoc with the corn.

They rose in a body as he approached, but when he went away they soon came down again.

Jack tried to get a shot at them, and found them too wary, for they would not let him get near them.

In appearance they resembled pheasants and seemed as if they would be excellent eating.

"I never saw such wary brutes," Jack observed. "It's a nuisance, too, because if we could kill a few, we could see what they would be like in the pot, and we should also be able to make some scarecrows to keep the rest away. I can't get near them."

"I'll tell you a dodge," remarked Harvey. "Although I'm a Londoner and the gov.'s a clerk in the City, I've been a good deal at my uncle's farm in Gloucestershire, and I'll tell you how he gets his game."

"Shoots it, I suppose?"

"No; he doesn't shoot it either; so you're out there. The landlord wouldn't let him start a feather with a gun," answered Harvey, with a knowing wink.

"How is it done, then?" asked Jack.

"I'll show you. You know those fowls we saved from the wreck?"

"Yes; they're in the coop now. A cock and three hens. I had an egg for my breakfast this morning. What of them?"

"Go and bring the cock, will you? He's a regular old Turk to fight, and I'll show you some fun."

Jack went to the hen-coop and brought out the cock, which was a thoroughbred game fowl.

During his absence, Harvey had broken off two blades from his penknife, which he had in his pocket.

Taking the bird from Jack, he fixed the blades on to the creature's legs.

"Those don't make bad spurs, do they?" he asked.

"Not at all," answered Jack.

"Follow me, then, and you shall see a match between the English barndoor fowl and the East Indian nonde-script."

They approached the cornfield, and the handsome birds flew away, perching as usual some distance off on high trees.

Harvey put down the cock, which began to crow loudly, and the boys hid behind the trunk of a tree.

The birds came cautiously back to their food, and one of the males, not liking the appearance of a stranger on the scene, flew down and gave him battle.

The birds flew at one another, and the issue was not long doubtful.

The English bird struck his enemy, and the blade of the penknife cut into his head, causing him to fall down with a death flutter.

"Dead as mutton," whispered Harvey gleefully.

"What a lark!" said Jack, in the same tone.

"Hold your noise," cried Harvey. "There's another coming to have a pitch in."

He was right.

Another of the beautiful birds came to fight the intruder and with an angry screech, which the cock met with a crow of defiance, the battle began, and ended quickly with the same result.

In a short time, half-a-dozen fine cock-birds were lying on their sides.

Harvey thought that enough, and took the victorious game-fowl back to the coop, having previously removed his formidable spurs, and then he rewarded him for his prowess with a handful of corn.

"What do you think of that?" asked Harvey, rejoicing Jack, who was examining the spoil.

"Stunning. Your uncle was a genius, Dick," replied Harkaway.

"That's how we used to get the squire's birds, as the keepers never heard a gun fired, they never twigged the caper. But I'll show you something else. My aunt was very fond of partridges, and we used to give them her.

First of all we spotted a covey, and when this was done we were bound to have them."

"How?"

"Give me about an hour, and I'll show you. I've got to make my preparation," answered Harvey.

"Cut along, then," said Jack, adding—

"Maple?"

"Yes, Jack," answered Maple.

"Don't 'yes, Jack' me," exclaimed Harkaway, with an affectation of anger. "I'm king. Speak to me with proper and becoming respect."

"Very well, my lord," said Maple.

"That won't do. It's not half grand enough."

"What does your majesty require? Will that do?"

"It's better. Take a brace of those birds; pluck them, and stick them before a fire. I want to see how they eat."

Maple sat down and began his task with a groan.

He hated plucking and cleaning birds.

But grumbling was no use, and he had to do it.

CHAPTER XXV.

HUNSTON'S RECEPTION BY THE NATIVES.

To use his own expression, Hunston was rather "down in the mouth" as he threaded his way through the luxuriant vegetation of the tropics. The day had broken with its usual splendour, and though not insensible to the beauties of nature, he had no inclination just then to give rein to his admiration.

His mind was full of dark, black thoughts.

"I hate Harkaway," he muttered; "I always did dislike him, and now I detest him more than ever. We never cottoned at school, and it's clear we can't pull together."

He forgot that Jack's hostility was entirely provoked by his own bad conduct.

He had never kept faith with his companions, and he had not hesitated to act in the most murderous manner towards them.

Was it any wonder that Jack was obliged to use harsh and strong measures?

But the wicked are always slow to blame themselves.

Their evil thoughts lead them to think unkindly of the virtuous and good.

As he went along he passed groves of nutmeg trees growing wild.

This useful tree is in such abundance that the land is full of it without its being planted by anyone.

All the islands in the Archipelago produce it more or less.

When June and September come, the nutmeg, which produces the mace outside the shell, is ready for gathering, and when the natives are inclined for trade, it brings a rich harvest.

Feeling thirsty, Hunston threw a heavy stone at a cocoanut palm, and brought down a rich cluster of the ripe fruit.

Cutting them open with his knife, he put his mouth to them and sucked out the rich juice.

Then he stooped down and cut a pineapple.

The Malays and Javanese call it *nanas*, and are very fond of it.

"Fancy a fellow cutting pineapples and sucking cocoanuts," said Hunston. "Those who go to sea have a chance of meeting with strange things. Some chaps like it. I don't. I'd rather be smoking my pipe and dipping my beak into a foaming pewter of malt in some quiet pub, going out of the Strand or Tower Hill, than running wild in this beastly hole."

He had not gone much further before he saw a tall dark form in front of him.

"Scissors!" he ejaculated.

He had come face to face with a native whom he had not much difficulty in recognizing as the Tuan Biza.

The recognition was mutual.

"Ha!" exclaimed the chief. "Has the great spirit sent you to us again?"

A cruel smile played round the corners of his ugly black mouth.

"Fiddlesticks," said Hunston. "I've nothing to do with spirits, although I shouldn't mind four of pale brandy, cold, with a lump of ice in it. This land of yours is so jolly hot."

"Why do you seek our camp then?" continued the Tuan Biza, who did not know whether to regard Hunston as a friend or enemy.

"To put you up to a good thing. Do you know enough English to understand that?"

The chief nodded his head in token of assent.

"I want to be your friend," continued Hunston. "Let us enter into an explanation. When you caught me a few days back, I had had a row with my companion."

"Ah!" said the Tuan Biza, with a significant look. "Those who with you were wreck."

"Just so."

"How many?"

The chief counted on his fingers one, two, three, four.

Then Hunston stopped him.

"There were four," he said. "But one is dead. That is to say, we were five in all. One being dead, and I being here, the number is reduced to three. Do you understand?"

"Yes," replied the Tuan Biza.

"Very well. They have arms, guns, pistols, and powder. Do you know what those are?"

"No," replied the chief. "I learn English when I work in the hold of a ship; but I never see what you speak of. I go to the coast, but not know much."

"I'll enlighten your ignorance then," said Hunston. "You remember Buru being hurt, as you thought, by the spirit? Well, it was a shot fired from a gun held by one of my late companions."

The chief intimated that he had heard of such wonderful things, though he had never handled them, and he thought he had seen them, but he had never taken any particular notice of or interest in them.

In fact, the Tuan Biza knew very little about the habits, customs and weapons of civilized countries.

He had obtained his knowledge of English from some traders to whom he sold spice, and who employed him to load the cargo; but that was long ago.

With great difficulty Hunston made him understand that guns could kill anything at a certain distance, and that his three companions had a good store of them, together with powder and shot.

He added that they lived in a house they had built, not

far from where they were then standing, and that they had saved a variety of valuable things from the wreck of their ship.

The Tuan Biza was a sharp man in his way, and he comprehended Hunston's meaning so far as to say—

“You want to be one of us, a head-hunter?”

“Yes. I should like to have Jack's head and Harvey's,” replied Hunston, savagely.

“Who Jack? Who Harvey?” asked the chief.

“The people in the castle—Jack's castle.”

“And the other, the three one?”

He meant the “third” one.

“Oh, he's a pal o' mine; a friend, I mean, and I'll entice him out. I don't want his head.”

“And you will show us how to get the lightning guns and the stores?”

“Of course I will. You and I with your men can do it,” answered Hunston. “But tell me, why are you stopping here?”

“Buru is badly hurt,” replied the Tuan Biza. “I thought the spirit struck him by lightning, but I now see that it was the fire-gun. We came here to have a feast, according to our customs. We not live here. Our island many miles, fifteen, twenty, thirty from here. When Buru well, we go back in two boat.”

“Oh, that's it? Will you take me with you, and make me your king?”

“First give us the fire-gun and the ship's things. Do this for us, and we will make you king,” answered the Tuan Biza cautiously.

“That's an agreement. I'll lead you against Jack's castle.”

“When?”

“Oh, there's no hurry. We'd better wait a few days, as they expect an attack now, and if we are quiet, they will not be so watchful. You see we have no guns, and they have an advantage over us.”

“Come with me,” said the chief. “I will make you friendly with my young men. You are tattooed, and they will not hurt you, because they think you are under the protection of the great spirit.”

“You won't let Keyali have my head? Keyali wants a head, you know,” remarked Hunston.

"I am Tuan Biza," answered the chief, drawing himself up grandly.

"All right. I only want to be on the safe side. No tricks upon travellers. Don't you try any games on with me. It won't wash."

This speech was not very comprehensible to the Tuan Biza, but he seemed to catch the sense of it, and, taking Hunston by the hand, led him some little distance to the camp.

The warriors were surprised to see Hunston.

His appearance, owing to his recent tattooing, was rather savage and ferocious, but they might not have received him favourably, unless the chief had told them that he was their great friend, and was going to get them heads and many good things belonging to the white men.

When the Tuan Biza's companions understood the benefit that Hunston was going to confer upon them, and realised that their chief had made a compact with him, they crowded round Hunston, and gave him signs of friendship.

This was enough for Hunston.

When he felt that his life was safe, he became arrogant once more.

"Give me some of that spirit stuff you make out of the palm," he exclaimed.

They brought him what he required in the half of a cocoanut.

Then he threw himself down on some leaves under a tree, and prepared to go to sleep.

"Keep your friends away from me, will you?" he continued to the chief. "I may be a worthy object of curiosity, but I want to be quiet for a spell, and your nigger friends don't smell nice when the wind blows this way."

The Tuan Biza ordered the open space around Hunston to be kept clear.

He collected his companions in another spot, and told them all what Hunston was going to do for them.

At the prospect of heads and plunder into the bargain, they all grew jolly.

The palm spirit passed freely from one to another.

War songs were sung, and they talked of nothing else than the coming murder of the whites, against whom their new associate Hunston was to lead them.

Hunston and the savages had made friends.

The alliance boded no good to Jack and his companions in the castle.

But some people's consciences are elastic.

At all events Hunston slept calmly, and did not seem to be troubled with bad dreams.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SEA.

IN about an hour Harvey came out of the castle with a basin full of peas.

"What have you got there?" inquired Jack.

"Peas—soaked in oil of vitriol," replied Harvey, "you'll see the birds pick them up and roll about quite groggy, when we can go and wring their necks. The peas will burn a hole in their crops, and fall out of themselves, so that the game won't be injured at all."

"You and your uncle were up to a few rummy dodges," remarked Jack. "I should call him a scientific poacher."

"He was all that. It was a lark to hear the squire's keeper come and say, 'I can't make out, Mr. Harvey, where the birds go to. Covey after covey vanishes. There must be some desperate poachers about somewhere,'" replied Harvey, laughing as he thought of it.

Walking to the edge of the clearing, Harvey scattered the peas about, and retired to watch the result.

The timid birds did not come down from the trees until the coast was clear.

When the flock found out the peas, which had been partially boiled in hot water, and then soaked in vitriol, they snapped them up savagely.

The effect was soon visible.

They were unable to fly, and staggered about in eccentric circles.

Jack and Harvey rushed up and seized them easily, wringing their necks, and bagging several dozen, which thinned the flock considerably. The finest they reserved for eating—the others they tied to stakes driven in the

ground, and used as scarecrows to frighten the others away.

"We might have tried that dodge on with old Mole's pigeons at Crawcour's," remarked Jack.

Maple now appeared with Jack's dinner. The birds were done to a turn, and found to be excellent eating.

"I don't know what this fowl is called, but it eats better than parrot," Jack remarked, "and your plan of killing these things will save our powder and shot, of which we haven't got too much. Try a wing."

"Don't mind if I do," answered Harvey.

It was the custom of Maple to go to the signal station that Mr. Mole had built, for an hour every day, to sweep the sea with a glass in the chance of seeing a passing sail.

Approaching Jack, he exclaimed—

"Shall I go to the look-out now?"

"Have you done your work?" replied Jack.

"Yes."

"Cut along, then, and don't go to sleep as you did the other day. If I come up and find you winking even, I'll take it out of you," Jack said.

Maple put a telescope under his arm, and went to the beach.

Harvey and Jack liked the birds so much that they cooked another brace.

It was a lovely day, and after looking through the glass, and seeing nothing in the shape of a ship, Maple thought he would like a bath.

"The sea looks jolly tempting," he muttered. "I'll chance a wallop. Jack's gorging those birds, and he's a beggar to eat when he gets anything he likes. I'll have a dip, if I die for it."

Quickly throwing off his clothes, he walked along the hot sands, which almost burned his naked feet, until he came to a rock-bound pool, clear as crystal.

The retiring tide had left it full of water, and its depth was about three feet, while its circumference might have been a couple of dozen yards.

Beautiful shells and sprigs of coral glistened at the bottom, which, like the beach, was lined with soft, golden sand.

Plunging in, Maple splashed about like a young and sportive porpoise.

"This is something like," he exclaimed, as he beat the water back in childish sport. "The sun has just made the water deliciously warm. This is Jack and Harvey's bathing-place. They'll warm me if they catch me."

Suddenly his eye caught something round and black lying on the top of the water, half hidden by a patch of seaweed in which it had got entangled.

"What's that?" he cried. "It looks like a bottle."

It was a bottle.

Wading up to it, he grasped an ordinary black bottle, which, once upon a time, might have contained port or sherry.

It seemed very light.

A cork was stuffed firmly into the neck, and as it rode on the surface of the water, it could have had nothing but air inside it.

"Only a bottle somebody has shied overboard for a lark," he muttered, being about to throw it away.

He, however, was struck by a brilliant idea.

"I'll make a cockshy of it," he said to himself.

Selecting a prominent piece of rock at the edge of the basin in which he was bathing, he placed the bottle on it.

Then he picked up half a dozen round middle-sized pebbles.

The first one he threw at the bottle missed it, but the second caught it plump in the middle, and it fell down cracked in twenty pieces.

"Well, shied, sir; good shot, indeed, sir!" he exclaimed, exulting over his own prowess, just as if he was applauding the delivery of the ball from "Long on" in a cricket-field.

Just at that moment Jack came up and thought Maple had gone mad, but the latter soon stopped the noise he was making when he heard the king's voice.

"What's all this hullabaloo about?" cried Jack; "and what do you mean by leaving the signal station when you're on duty?"

"I wanted to bathe," replied Maple.

"I believe you will be all the sweeter for washing, and on that ground I won't say anything more about it," Jack exclaimed, with a smile. "But what was that I heard break? It sounded like glass."

"So it was. I found a bottle and made a cockshy of it. There is what remains of it."

Jack approached the broken bottle and the wind gently wafted a slip of paper towards him.

He bent down and seized it between his fingers.

"I say!" he cried; "it's lucky I came up."

"Why?" asked Maple.

"Because it's a message from the sea."

"What's that?"

"Don't you know that very often when a ship is sinking, people will write something on a bit of paper, and putting it in a bottle, cork it down and chuck it into the sea, in the expectation of its being washed ashore or picked up by some one?"

"And is that a message?" asked Maple, coming out of the water and basking in the sun to dry himself before he put on his clothes.

Jack was too much absorbed in the perusal of the message to pay him any further attention.

"What is it, Jack? You might tell a fellow," continued Maple, who really felt curious.

"Find out," answered Jack.

Holding the paper in his hand, he hastened back to the castle to find Harvey.

The latter was lying under a tree in front of the castle, to protect himself from the heat, which, being the middle of the day, was very great.

As near as possible the sun was in its meridian.

"What's the shindy, Jack?" asked Harvey, noticing that he was agitated.

"Come inside and I'll tell you," replied Jack.

"Just like my luck," muttered Harvey, "I no sooner settle myself down for a snooze than somebody rouses me. I'm like the old woman in the story, who said she was doomed to be frustrated."

He entered the castle after Jack, singing—

"I feel—I feel—I feel—
I feel like a morning star;
I feel—I feel—I feel——"

"I wish you'd make some allowance for my feelings, Dick, and not be howling that rubbish in my ear," interrupted Jack.

"What's come to your royal highness?" asked Harvey.

"A message from the sea."

"The deuce there has! That's interesting. Let's have it," Harvey exclaimed, adding—

"The most devoted and obedient subject of your august majesty impatiently awaits your pleasure. Speak, oh king, and don't make any bones about it."

"I'll break your bones, Dick, if you chaff," answered Jack good-humouredly.

"Start with Maple or send him into the woods to catch a nigger, if your majesty is in a savage humour," replied Harvey.

"Do you want to hear the message?"

"Yes. What did I leave my nest under the palm tree for? I'd rigged up a punkah—a beautiful one. It is an old door, hung on a branch. I have tied a piece of string to it, and can move it up and down, which makes a splendid draught just over one's head. I shouldn't have left it, I can assure you, unless I thought urgent affairs of state required my presence in the council chamber. Fire away."

Jack straightened the paper, and prepared to read.

CHAPTER XXVII

WIDE AWAKE.

THIS was the message from the sea:—

"Having come to the conclusion that I might improve my circumstances by emigration, I embarked with my wife and child in the 'Eastern Monarch' but on gaining the Indian Ocean, we encountered bad weather, which ultimately made us a wreck.

"At the time I write, the boats are being lowered, and we are going to seek safety where we may find it.

"This is to let my friends in England know how dreadful our situation is. God help us!"

Jack paused, and looked up.

"Well, what is there in that?" inquired Harvey.

"The signature is 'J. Scratchley, late of Highgate, London,'" answered Jack.

"What then?"

"Haven't I told you that I was brought up by a Mr. Scratchley?"

"Ah, I see."

"And Emily, his dear little daughter, is the only girl I ever loved in my life."

"Excuse my forgetfulness," said Harvey. "I remember it now. Of course you were spoony on Emily, and you think that she has been wrecked with her father in the 'Eastern Monarch.' It's as plain as a pikestaff now. But don't fret. She's somewhere about. No doubt she's saved."

"I don't know," replied Jack, with a shake of the head.

"Oh, yes; she is. It's better than if she'd 'gone to Brigham Young, a Mormonite to be.'"

"I'll tell you what I fancy," continued Jack. "I fancy Emily is that girl that Hunston's savages spoke about. It's my firm impression that she is on one of those islands."

"Shouldn't wonder," answered Harvey, after thinking a moment. "It's very likely; and if it is Emily, won't it be jolly to save her?"

"She must be getting a big girl now. Who'd have thought old Scratchley would have emigrated?"

"Who'd would have thought of Mole going to China."

"True," said Jack. "It's a curious world; so full of changes. We never know one year where we shall be next."

"Was this letter corked up in a bottle?"

"Yes."

"What's the date?"

"It isn't dated. I suppose Scratchley was too much flurried to think of dates; and if it were it wouldn't help us, for I don't really know the day of the week or the month of the year. I can only guess at them."

"What's the odds, so long as you're happy?" said Harvey.

"I'm not happy," answered Jack. "I don't mind being here so much because I've got you, and it's always jolly to have a friend. Robinson Crusoe is all very well on paper, but in reality it becomes tiresome when it goes on too long. I must rescue Emily."

"She's getting a big girl by this time," observed Harvey.

"Yes ; and I'm a big boy. Within the last few weeks I feel as if I had become a man, Dick."

"So do I. Being in one's own house makes one feel manly."

"What's that ?" cried Jack, suddenly.

"What ?"

"Hush !" Jack continued, putting his finger to his lips ; adding, as he lowered his voice to a whisper—" There is some one in the bushes to the left. Keep a good lookout, I'll go and fox him."

In a moment Jack had glided away.

Before Harvey had recovered from his astonishment, he had disappeared.

Five minutes had elapsed. It was an age to Harvey.

Then Jack returned.

"That's worth something," he exclaimed. "I've found out what's going on. Wasn't there a cove in ancient history who had a hundred eyes ?"

"Argus. Mythological sort of buffer," replied Harvey.

"That's the man. Well, one ought to be like him to keep one's head on one's shoulders. What do you think ? You'll never guess."

"I shan't try. Put me out of my misery at once," answered Harvey.

"I saw Maple talking to Hunston."

"No !"

"I did though, and no flies," replied Jack.

"You should say mosquitoes. Mosquitoes are the customers one meets with here," remarked Harvey.

"It's all the same. A 'muskeeter' is only a big, overgrown, stinging sort of fly. But listen to me. Maple has been talking to Hunston, and has agreed to betray us."

"Did you hear that ?"

"Yes ; I was just in time. If I'd had my gun, I do think I should have felt justified in peppering Mr. Hunston."

"The brute !" said Harvey.

"There is to be a night attack," continued Jack.

"When ?"

"To-night. Maple is to ask us to be on guard, and to kill the dog. Then the niggers, led by Hunston, are to come up and tomahawk us."

"A very neat arrangement."

"Isn't it? Fortunately we are wide awake, and they've got to spell 'able' before they do it."

"It doesn't matter so much now we know what their little game is," said Harvey. "Because we can choke them off if they don't surprise us."

"I don't mean that enterprising young nigger Keyali, I told you of, to have my head," replied Jack.

"And he shan't have mine. Not much. I guess we shall be too many for them."

"Rather. Just a few," answered Jack. "Still it is as well to know what we've got to expect."

"We ought to have started Maple when we kicked Hunston out."

"So we ought. They always did hang together."

"What a reptile he is," Harvey observed.

"Reptile. He's worse than that. I'd rather make a friend of a boa constrictor than of him," replied Jack, indignantly.

"What shall we do with him? Drown him like a kitten, or kill him with a back-hander like a rabbit?"

"Neither one nor the other. When we are attacked he is to go over to the enemy with as many loaded guns as he can carry. He knows where the loaded guns are. We will change the position, and put some empty ones there."

"That's not bad, but he ought to be done something to," said Harvey.

"Wait till the battle begins. The savages will think their guns, stolen by Maple, are loaded, and they will advance pluckily. You'll see Maple and Hunston among them, and if I get a cool shot at either of them, I shall think I'm justified in pulling the trigger."

"I should think you would, too," said Harvey.

"We shall kill the whole boiling of them, and a good job it will be. It's very hard we can't be left alone. We're not interfering with anyone. However, they'll get it hot this journey, or I'm very much mistaken."

Presently Maple came up, looking rather sheepish.

"Hullo, Maple, what's the row?" asked Harvey.

"I'm all right," replied Maple, "bar the heat. This country takes it out of a fellow, and makes him want to sleep half his time."

"Oh! I thought you'd seen somebody?"

"I haven't seen anybody, and don't want to."

"Don't stand there jawing. Go and do something," exclaimed Harvey. "What do you suppose we keep you for?"

Maple slunk away, and pretended to busy himself in some way.

"It'll soon be over," he said to himself. "They don't know as much as I do."

And he chuckled quietly.

In the afternoon Jack placed some empty guns where the loaded ones had been, and transferred the latter to another spot.

He and Harvey did not appear to have any idea of what was going on, and treated Maple just as they had done before.

This threw the latter off his guard.

Jack was on guard, but he lay down, and Maple thought he was asleep.

Taking advantage of his apparent slumber, he removed the guns and put them under a tree in the clearing.

All this was observed by Jack.

It was about twelve o'clock when Maple disappeared altogether.

Jack rose and touched Harvey on the shoulder.

"Now for it," he exclaimed.

"Are they here?" asked Harvey, who, in accordance with their arrangements, had been having a nap.

"I don't think they are far off. Wake up. Maple's stepped it."

"Are the guns gone?"

"Yes."

"I'm ready," said Harvey. "Give us your hand, Jack. Think of me if I'm picked off."

"God bless you, Dick. If you die I shall lose the only friend I ever had," answered Jack, whose eyes were moist with tears.

"I can say the same. But I say, this won't do. You're blubbering, and so am I. Suppose you turn the cock on in another direction. Let's have a drop of something."

Jack produced a bottle of brandy, and they both took a sip.

Nero began to growl.

"The dog's growling," exclaimed Harvey.

"Then they're coming. Look out. The loaded guns are in that corner. I have made two loopholes, one on each side of the door. You take one. I'll take the other."

"Right you are," replied Harvey, who was freshened up by the brandy.

"Cover your man before you fire. There are a dozen of them, besides Hunston and Maple."

"They've got nothing but spears," exclaimed Harvey. They're not worth their salt as fighting men against us."

All at once the dog gave a moan.

Jack peeped out, and saw him lying on his side.

It was evident that he had been killed by an arrow.

Setting his teeth together, Jack said—

"Stand close, Dick. They've killed the dog. There is just light enough to enable us to see the dark-skinned brutes. It's their lives or ours."

"So it is," replied Harvey. I don't like the idea of shooting anyone, but it's their lookout, and not ours. We don't attack them."

As he spoke, a troop of dusky savages emerged from the trees that skirted the clearing, and approached the castle.

The natives, with Hunston, walked behind Maple, who was some yards in front.

Jack sank on the ground, and simulated sleep again.

"Jack—Jack, old man," said Maple.

There was no answer.

"I say, Jack," continued Maple.

Still no answer.

Maple retired.

"It's all right. They're both asleep, and I've stolen the guns," Jack heard him say.

Then Hunston spoke to the Tuan Biza, and the natives, in obedience to a sign, again advanced.

"Now, Dick, let 'em have it. Remember, it's us or them. Aim low," whispered Jack.

In an instant a couple of reports were heard.

These were followed by another and another in quick succession.

Loud cries arose on every side.

All was darkness and confusion.

The defenders of the castle continued to fire as rapidly as they were able.

It must be acknowledged that Hunston displayed great courage.

His voice could be heard incessantly urging on the savages whom he had led against his former friends, and when he found that the guns Maple had supplied them with would not go off, his rage knew no bounds.

The defenders of the castle kept up a steady fire. Such weapons as the natives possessed were of no use against the walls of the castle.

Seeing his companions falling around him, the Tuan Biza gave the orders to advance in a body, and storm the castle.

This was what Jack was waiting for.

With his own hands he pulled the string connected with the battery of firearms.

There was the report of a volley of musketry, loud cries followed the discharge, and then there was a solemn stillness, which intimated that the attacking party had either all perished, or had thought it advisable to beat a retreat.

Jack was completely victorious.

He did not, however, cease his vigilance—for it was impossible to tell what plans the savages might have made.

They might have had reinforcements, or be meditating an attack in another quarter.

So two weary hours passed, and then the much longed-for daylight came.

Neither Jack nor Harvey had made more than a passing remark occasionally.

Now they joined one another, and cautiously ventured outside.

Their victory had been more complete than even they had anticipated.

Eleven dead bodies lay upon the ground.

First of all they passed the dog, which had been killed at an early part of the engagement, and Jack said—

“Poor Nero!”

Ten of the bodies were those of fine, handsome, full-grown natives.

The eleventh was a white.

Passing in front of the corpse, Jack said sorrowfully—

“He has brought it upon himself. In the confusion and the darkness I cannot say whether you or I caused his death, Dick.”

It was Maple.

The boy was lying on his back, and a tranquil expression sat upon his features, as if death had been instantaneous, which perhaps it was, there being a wound in the region of the heart, through which the bullet probably passed.

“Poor little beggar,” remarked Harvey. “I’m sorry he’s gone. It makes one feel lonely, though I can’t say I really liked him. He never did anything to deserve pity at our hands.”

“Still,” said Jack, “it’s one more gone. We were five when we were cast on this island. Mole was the first to go, then Hunston left us, and now Maple’s dead.”

“He’d have killed us, Jack, if he had won the fight.”

“So he would, but I would rather Hunston had been killed. Maple was led by him.”

“Not always. Maple had a wicked mind, though as he’s gone, I won’t say anything against him. If you will look at the matter in the light I do, you will come to think that it’s a good thing we are left to ourselves. It strikes me we shall get on better.”

“You and I, Dick, could jog along anywhere; we were made to run together in double harness.”

“There don’t fret any more about Maple,” replied Harvey. “He was killed in fair fight, and deserved his fate; for a more treacherous trick than to steal our guns was never thought of.”

“He and Hunston arranged it; by the way, I suppose Hunston has got off clear with the Tuan Biza. I don’t see the chief among the slain.”

“We have killed nearly all of them—that’s a comfort,” Harvey remarked.

“After what has happened, Hunston will never come back to us,” Jack said. “He’ll go over to the Tuan Biza’s island and perhaps organise a fresh expedition against us.”

“I can’t understand two English fellows like Hunston and Maple fighting against their own friends,” Harvey said. “It licks me altogether.”

"I've been thinking about it," replied Jack; "and it seems to me that when a man gives way to his wicked thoughts and passions, ever so little, he opens the door to temptation, and he goes on doing low and dirty things till it becomes a habit with him, and he doesn't know when to stop."

"There's a good deal of truth in that; a fellow becomes a villain by degrees, not all at once."

"Examine the history of a thief," continued Jack, "and you will find that he has been bad in other things, before he brought himself to steal. People are not born bad. Its giving way to temper, idleness, and one's passion, and being self-willed, that does it; but I don't want to preach a sermon. Maple's dead, and we must bury him decently, as well as those others."

"Better dig a trench for the natives," Harvey suggested.

"Very well," answered Jack, "and give Maple a grave to himself. Fancy, Dick, our having killed all those. It seems very dreadful, doesn't it?"

"Killing's no murder in self-defence. We didn't begin the row. Take a spade and make a start. I'll wire in on this side and meet you half way."

They selected a sequestered spot, some little distance from the castle, and in about four hours had dug a trench sufficiently deep to bury the natives in.

Reverently they placed the bodies in the hole and covered them up with the soil, for they knew that all, whether Christian or savage, go, after death, to meet their Creator.

Their next care was to bury Maple, which they did in a green spot, on which the sunshine played, and around which the birds sang and sported.

Neither Jack nor Harvey said anything, but they both cried heartily as they laid the little fellow's body in the grave.

They were not ashamed of their tears.

Nor had they any reason to be so.

We like a boy, or a man either for that matter, to be able to shed a tear when there is occasion for it.

It shows that he's got a heart and not a bit of stone in his bosom.

When the last sod had been beaten down, Jack fell on his knees and said something in a low voice.

Harvey did not hear every word, but he knew it was a prayer.

When Jack had done, Dick slowly said—

“Amen.”

All the rest of that day Jack was busy carving a little cross, which he placed at the head of the grave.

As they went away after performing their last office of respect for the memory of the dead, Jack's eyes were moistened again.

He seized Harvey's hand, and wringing it, exclaimed—

“I can't help it, Dick. I know I'm an old fool; but I thought I should make a decent man of him some day if I could only get him away from Hunston's influence.”

“When sow's ears make silk purses, then——” began Harvey.

“I know all that,” interrupted Jack. “Perhaps you're right. Let's talk about something else. Come for a stroll; we're safe enough now. The savages have had enough to last them some time and they won't bother us again, I'll bet.”

“I don't like to leave the castle,” replied Harvey.

“There's no danger. I think we have killed the lot with the exception of the Tuan Biza and Hunston.”

“The very two I should have liked to see fall.”

“Yes. They are the ones who are likely to give us future trouble,” replied Jack.

As they went along they remarked that the volcanic mountain was in a state of agitation.

On the south west side, about one-fourth of the distance from its summit, was a deep, wide gulf.

Out of this arose thick opaque clouds of white gas, which, in the still clear air, was seen rolling grandly upwards in one gigantic, expanding column to the sky.

On its top were thin, veil-like clouds, which occasionally gathered and then slowly floated away, dissolving into the pure ether.

These cloud masses were chiefly composed of steam and sulphurous acid gas.

As they poured out they indicated what an active laboratory nature had deep within the bowels of this old volcano.

“Look out, Jack!” cried Harvey all at once.

In a moment Jack had raised his gun to his shoulder.

“What is it?” he exclaimed.

"I don't know exactly, but unless I am going to fancy things, I could swear I saw a nigger in the bush."

As he spoke a native emerged from the concealment of the jungle.

He advanced on his hands and knees in token of submission, and finding that no harm was done him, he stood upright in a submissive attitude.

Of middle height, the fellow had a good-humoured, ingenious countenance, though he appeared to have suffered recently from hunger.

His only clothing was the strip of the inner bark of a tree, beaten with stones, until it looked very much like rough white paper, and which we have described before as being peculiar to these islands.

It passed round the waist, and covered the loins in such a way, that one end hung down as far as the knee.

He was unarmed, and Jack refrained from firing at him, as he did not seem to have the slightest intention of harming them.

"Take care," said Harvey, as he saw Jack lower his gun; "perhaps there are more behind, and it's only a dodge."

"I don't think so. You keep guard, while I make signs and try to find out what his game is."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MONDAY.

THE native went through a performance which, as Jack said, would have puzzled a deaf and dumb man.

It was clear that the signs he made were intended to convey to the boys that he claimed their protection, and would be their servant.

The native climbed up a tree, and bringing down fruit, placed it at Jack's feet, kneeling before the boys; and taking Harvey's hand, he struck himself on the head with it, meaning he would not resent a blow.

Then he pointed to the sea with every expression of horror, as if his enemies were in boats.

"It's quite a pantomime," remarked Harvey.

"My idea," answered Jack, "is, that this fellow is one of the victims brought over here by the natives who attacked us. I saw them kill one, you know. Perhaps this one escaped, and so disappointed them in their expectation of his head."

"Shouldn't wonder," replied Harvey.

"Now Maple's gone we shall want some one to drudge about. Suppose we enlist this Mr. What-d'ye-call-him."

"Old Bob Crusoe had his man, and he called him Friday. I vote we christen Thingamagig there Monday. I like Mondays. We used to get our pocket-money at Crawcour's on a Monday. And he sang—

"He had a man Friday
To keep his house tidy;
Fortunate Robinson Crusoe!

Or we might say—

"It happened on one day,
We came across Monday;

Finish the verse for me, Jack. I was never good at poetry."

"I couldn't finish it, if you paid me for it," replied Jack. "But I'll bet a pound of snuff, that this will turn out an honest fellow."

While they were talking, the native appeared very anxious, as if they thought they meant to kill him.

Jack, however, took him by the hand, and shook it, giving him to understand by a variety of signs that they would do him no harm.

They led him back to the castle and fed him on such food as they had ready to hand, which he seemed to like very much.

Jack showed him how to do various things, and he evinced an aptitude and willingness that made him a valuable acquaintance.

Monday saved the boys a great deal of trouble, and the poor creature was as faithful as a dog, and as grateful as possible for their kindness.

He began to learn English, and acquired a great proficiency in a short time, being singularly quick.

If he once heard a word and was given its meaning, he never forgot it, and would repeat it over and over again to himself to impress it on his memory.

Monday was not more than two-and-twenty, strong and healthy, and not bad-looking, for one of his people.

It was to Jack that he attached himself more than Harvey, though he liked both and obeyed orders from each.

Still he was more Jack's man than Harvey's, if any distinction could be fairly drawn.

Both the boys used to take the greatest interest in teaching him their own language, to which task they devoted several hours each day.

Of course, when he knew English, he would be of more use to them and a better companion.

Fully three months passed.

Their corn and their potatoes came up and were gathered into the warehouse in the castle; before the rainy season began.

Nothing had been seen or heard of Hunston.

Whether he was alive or dead they did not know.

But Jack had made a tour of the island which took him three days, and he saw no signs anywhere of other occupants than themselves.

The grass was growing green and waving over Maple's grave.

Both Hunston and Maple were in a measure forgotten.

At length Monday began to talk.

His English was broken and imperfect, as is generally the case with those who are commencing to learn a language, for it takes time to make one's self proficient in the moods, tenses, etc., of a strange tongue.

However he spoke well enough to enable Jack to understand him.

This is in effect what he said—

About twenty-four miles off, or six hours' sail, there were two islands not more than one hour's sail from each other.

One was called Ship Island, which was the one Hunston had heard of from the Tuan Biza.

The other was named Limbi.

From this one Monday came. In his own country his name was Metabella, but he was quite reconciled to the name given him, and even seemed rather flattered at it.

The inhabitants of the two islands were pretty nearly equal in point of numbers, and they were all head-hunters.

They continually made war upon one another.

The victorious party always ate its captives, and generally, in fine weather, made a voyage to another neighbouring island, and had a sort of a picnic.

"Lively amusement," remarked Jack to Harvey, as Monday was proceeding with his recital.

"Nice neighbours," answered Harvey.

Once, Monday said, a Hukam Tua, or missionary, as far as Jack could make him out, came to Limbi in a ship.

The day after his arrival the natives killed and ate him.

"Did you have a bit?" asked Harvey.

"Yes," replied Monday; "me have bit. Hukam Tua good, fat, much nice, Monday eat him up quick!"

"You cannibal beast, I shall never like you again," cried Harvey, turning away in disgust and loathing, which the horrid confession was quite calculated to produce in the breast of a European.

Monday saw the expression of his face.

"No eat mans now," he said hastily. "Monday know better, and never more eat up mans. No; never—no."

The poor fellow kept on saying this until Harvey told him he forgave him, because in those days he did not know any better.

"Are you sure you won't wake up some night and make a meal of me?" asked Harvey.

Monday said there was no chance of that. The teaching he had received and the affection he had for his masters, would prevent him from doing anything of that sort.

Some little time after this conversation Jack thought of a question which he wished to put to Monday.

From what Hunston had told him of the remarks of the Tuan Biza, and from the letter in the bottle that Maple had picked up, he fancied his dear old friend Emily was a captive in the hands of the savages.

The letter was signed by Mr. Scratchley of Highgate, and it wasn't likely there would be two people of that name.

Now was it surprising that a scheming, unscrupulous man like Scratchley should make up his mind to emigrate.

Thousands of people do the same thing every year.

If then, Mr. Scratchley, his wife and child didn't remain on board the "Eastern Monarch," when she was

deserted in a sinking condition, it was fair to suppose that they escaped in the boats.

Still there was a stretch of the imagination on Jack's part in supposing that the girl in captivity, of whom the chief had told Hunston, was Emily.

Nevertheless, Jack had got hold of the idea ; and when, as he said, "he got a thing fixed in his nut, it wasn't easy to get it out again."

So he took Monday on one side and said—

"Did you hear in your country of an English girl being shut up?"

He did not say in captivity, or use any long words, because he thought they would be beyond Monday's comprehension.

For this reason he always used as plain language as he could pitch upon.

"Not my country," answered Monday ; "on Ship Island, a girl ; that's why call Ship Island."

"Oh, indeed," said Jack ; "then on Ship Island they have got a girl from an English vessel?"

"Yes," answered Monday, nodding his head up and down.

"How do you know this?"

"Oh, I hear from one my people who go there to make war. We beat them last time, though they take me and one more, and carry over here to eat."

"Which are the best warriors, your people or the other islanders?"

"Sometimes one, sometimes another. It's not always one," answered Monday.

"I should like to go to your natives and help them to make war, and save this English girl," continued Jack.

Monday's countenance brightened.

"Come, come," he cried. "You shoot your powder shot, you kill all, and we never have no more war."

As he spoke, he danced round and round in a sort of ecstasy.

"But I thought your people liked war," said Jack.

"Me teach them better. If no one make no more war on them, then my people no more war," said Monday.

"Do you think we could build a boat and go over to your country?"

"Oh, yes ; me build boat."

Jack knew that the natives could build boats.

They have no iron, and therefore, the whole boat is made of wood; but it is not the less seaworthy on that account.

The central part is low, and the bow and stern curve up high.

These boats generally resembled those used in the South Sea.

"Give Monday axe," exclaimed the faithful fellow.

"He soon make boat, but"—and his face assumed a sorrowful expression—"no send Monday away. Save Monday's life. Kill Monday if you part him."

By which he meant to say that he should die if Jack sent him away.

"I won't part with you," answered Jack, "so long as you do as I tell you. But I want to go to your island and make friends with your chief."

"Why make friends?"

"Will they not thank me for being kind to you?"

"Oh, yes! Much thank. You be great chief."

"Very well. I will lead them against their enemies, and we will rescue the English girl," said Jack.

It was annoying to him to think that Emily, if it was she, should be amongst the natives with whom he supposed Hunston had gone to live.

Sending Monday about his business he sought Harvey, who was having what he called "a jolly," that is, he was lying on his back under a tree, and sipping a drink he had made through a straw, while he read a book.

"Dick," cried Jack, "we're going to build a boat."

"Bully for you!" answered Harvey.

"And we're going over to Monday's savages, and intend trying to make them fight Hunston, and rescue the English girl."

"Good again. I'm on."

"It's worrying me to think that Emily may be in the power of Hunston and the Tuan Biza."

"Gall and wormwood, as the novels say," remarked Harvey.

"What do you say to it?" continued Jack.

"I like the idea much," replied Harvey. "To tell the truth, this sort of life is all very well for a month or two, but it gets very wearying after a bit. I'd do anything for a dust up."

"All right. Help us to make the boat."

"Like a shot. Is Monday a naval architect?"

"He says so," replied Jack.

"His accomplishments come out one by one. First of all he knows how to cook and eat a human being, next he learns English, then he builds boats. Monday's developing. It's a good dodge, in a wild and unknown island, to have a tame nigger."

Jack smiled.

That afternoon they commenced building the boat, in which they were to make the adventurous voyage which had for its object the rescue of the girl Jack supposed to be Emily.

Whether he was right or not we shall soon see.

CHAPTER XXIX.

BUILDING THE BOAT.

THE arrival of Monday proved very valuable to the boys. He grew much attached to them.

They could both sleep at night, for the young savage soon learnt to load and fire a gun, and kept watch while his masters slept.

His progress in learning English was very quick, and showed him to be sharp and clever.

The project of building a boat proceeded satisfactorily.

Monday had helped to make boats on his own island of Limpi.

Selecting a spot near the sea he set to work.

The trees in the tropics grow for centuries, and then fall down from decay, literally dying from old age.

A constant source of danger in these regions arises from these falling trees, which topple down without any warning.

Choosing a mighty tree which had just fallen Monday began to hollow out the trunk.

It was a work that took some time.

Monday called this species of boat a "leper-leper," though in the far west it would be spoken of as a "dug-out."

When the tree was sufficiently hollowed pieces of plank were placed on the sides to raise them to the proper height.

Both sides are sharp and curve upwards.

About four feet from the bow a pole is laid across, and another the same distance from the stern.

These project outward from the sides of the boat, and to them is fastened a bamboo, the whole forming what is known as an outrigger.

This is necessary, because the canoes are narrow and crank.

Monday declared that with a small triangular sail and a paddle he could manage a leper-leper in the fiercest storm.

Jack's inventive genius supplied a rudder, of the use of which Monday seemed profoundly ignorant.

It was rare fun for the boys when at work, singing, laughing, and talking.

They kept up their spirits in spite of the danger that surrounded them and their lonely position.

Imagine them on the skirts of the thick woods, where troops of large black monkeys kept up a perpetual hooting or trumpeting.

Their cries resembled a score of amateurs practising on trombones.

Sometimes the din they made was quite deafening, and Jack could not hear himself speak.

Then he fired his gun amongst them, and they scampered off, their chattering ceasing for a time.

But they would return, as if they took a curious interest in what was going on, and rather liked boat building than otherwise.

Both Jack and Harvey were rather sorry at the idea of leaving the island.

Their corn and potatoes were got in, and the castle had become quite a dear spot to them.

"It's no use grumbling," remarked Jack. "We must go some time or other, and if we don't like Monday's friends, we can come back here again."

"I know what is driving you on, Jack," exclaimed Harvey.

"What?"

"A wish to rescue Emily, if it should, indeed, be your little friend who is in the hands of the savages."

"I don't mind owning it," answered Jack. "Fancy Emily in the power of the head-hunters, and the indignities she may be daily and hourly subjected to."

"Hunston is with the savages, and he would protect her."

"Would he?" said Jack, angrily. "That's all you know about Master Hunston. He is much more likely to add to her worries."

"Why?"

"Because Emmy is a pretty girl, and Hunston's got an eye for a handsome face."

"Well," replied Harvey, "I am game to go anywhere with you, and if there's any fighting to be done, old boy, I shan't shirk my share of it, as you know."

"Give us your fist, old fellow ; you're a trump," said Jack.

The boys shook hands, and no more was said about Emily just then, for Jack's eyes filled with tears, and Harvey saw that he felt deeply about the matter.

Jack had an additional reason for wishing to leave the island.

He never knew at what moment Hunston and the Tuan Biza might sweep down upon them with an overwhelming force.

That the chief would wish to revenge the death of his comrades who had perished in the attack upon the castle there was no doubt.

A second assault might be more successful.

What were three people against perhaps a hundred.

In the island of Limbi, with Monday's friends, they would be safe.

There was just as much chance of a ship's passing by Limbi and taking them off, as there was of one approaching Harkaway Island.

So it was resolved to abandon the castle, for a time at least.

According to Monday's account, Limbi was only about twenty English miles off.

Not a very formidable voyage after all.

They had scoured Harkaway Island from one end to the other, by making a circuit round it, and they had satisfied themselves that Hunston and the Tuan Biza had quitted it.

The island on which the Tuan Biza and his followers lived was visible from Limbi, and had the name of Pisang.

Limbi and Pisang were always at war.

In the last battle between the rival tribes, the Limbians had been surprised, and Monday was captured.

But Monday said, "We much fight, and more win than the Pisangs. Next time, we take plenty Pisangs and cut off heads."

"You won't cut off heads and eat your enemies any more, will you?" asked Jack, looking crossly at him.

"Not me. Monday no cut and eat," replied the poor fellow. "My people not know what you told me about the Bible, and that it wrong to eat man flesh. Monday tell them all and then they must change, alter."

"We'll wake up the Pisangs or whatever they call themselves," observed Harvey.

"Yes," replied Jack, "we shall have to go on the war-path, for Emily's sake."

"We'll lick 'em into eternal smash," replied Harvey, loudly. "I should like to see the half-dozen niggers that can stand against one pure-born Britisher."

Jack laughed.

"You may laugh," continued Harvey. "But there is something about an Englishman that scares a nigger and a Frenchman. I suppose it's our roast beef."

"Not much of that here," Jack said.

"That's the worst of this outlandish hole," Harvey replied, "you can't get your proper grub. If ever we are licked, I shall put it down to that."

"So I would, Dick."

"It's a theory of mine that a man ought to have his proper grub," Harvey said sagely. "Do we ever have puddings? Have we seen a cow, dead or alive, since we landed?"

"I've seen a calf," remarked Jack.

"Jack, who's your friend?" demanded Harvey.

"You are, I hope."

"Then don't run the risk of losing him through idle chaff. You called me a calf. Veal's all very well in its way, but to call me a calf, and before Monday too. It's lowering the dignity of your lieutenant."

"I apologise, Dick. It shan't occur again," Jack said, anxious to soothe his friend's wounded vanity.

"I accept the apology, but it wasn't kind," Harvey answered, becoming good-humoured again. "Let's see, as the blind man said, what were we talking about?"

"Grub."

"So we were. Now I'll tell you what I should like to have a turn at, that's tripe and onions. Oh, my! fancy a go in at tripe, Jack!"

"I can't fancy anything half so beastly in this hot climate," replied Jack; "and I am surprised at your vulgar tastes. Mark that poll parrot. There he goes—flying over our heads. Mark! mark!"

"He's settled. I see him."

"So do I," answered Jack, as he fired.

"Monday will stew the bird with a clove of garlic. That will beat all the tripe in Whitechapel," said Jack.

"Never mind," said Harvey with a grave shake of the head. "Parrots are not bad, but I'll stick out for stewed eels and tripe."

"What next will you want?" asked Jack, adding—"I wish you'd be more like the sailor's parrot."

"What did he do?"

"He didn't talk much, but he was a beggar to think."

"Thank you," said Harvey, biting his lip. "Sorry I spoke; but I'm much obliged to your majesty, and I'll not forget you."

The boat was nearly finished.

All that remained to be done was to step the mast, and rig a sail, the rudder being already shipped.

Monday was digging a channel in the sand to float her.

In appearance the boat was not exactly handsome, but she was very long and deep.

It was Jack's intention to load her with all sorts of stores almost up to the gunwale, as he knew that guns, powder, and bullets, would be of the greatest use to him and the savages with whom, through Monday's influence, he hoped to make friends.

Provisions did not matter so much, as the natives were known to be good hunters; but a case or two of spirits would not be unacceptable, he thought, to the chief and his principal advisers.

Jack turned away from Harvey, and watched Monday as he was digging.

Each spadeful he cast up glittered strangely in the sun.

Peering more curiously into the sandy mixture, he stooped down, and took up some in his hand.

Then he blew away the lighter particles, and there remained some golden dust, among which were a few large rugged lumps about the size of a small pea.

"What have you got there, Jack?" inquired Harvey.

"Gold," replied Jack, quietly.

"Nonsense."

"If I haven't I'm a Dutchman," Jack exclaimed.

Harvey approached nearer, and looked wonderingly at the auriferous particles.

"Well," he ejaculated, "that's the greatest lick out. Fancy finding gold here."

"Why not?" said Jack. "We're in the land of romance, my boy, and if I found a diamond as big as a pigeon's egg, I shouldn't be surprised; though, to tell you the truth, I never thought there was gold here, but I have heard the sailors say that the natives of these islands trade in gold dust."

"I say, Monday," cried Harvey.

"What now, Mast' Harvey?" asked the black.

"Have you ever seen this stuff before?"

He showed him some of the glittering ore which he took from Jack's hand.

Monday looked at it carefully before he replied.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE VALLEY OF DEATH.

"Oh, yes," answered Monday, after a moment's examination. "It's gold. We find much like this, and sell. We make things for the nose and ears."

"Rings?"

"Yes, rings. Plenty stuff like that. We think nothing," said Monday, in a tone of indifference.

"They wouldn't say that in Europe," remarked Jack.

"Not exactly," answered Harvey. "It wants washing and sifting; but it's my opinion one might make a very tidy little fortune out of this island."

It is a fact that gold is found in the western and

southern parts of Borneo, as well as in Luzon and the Philippines, and in the peninsula of Celebes.

The gold is bought and sold in the form of dust, as the natives do not understand the art of coining.

"We have no time to spare to collect it," said Jack, looking wistfully at the beautiful golden grains in his hand.

"It's all very well for you to talk like that, Jack," exclaimed Harvey.

"Why?"

"You are rich, and your gov.'s got lots of tin, while mine is poor, and it's a scramble at home often enough among the kids for the potato skins."

"You can gather some if you like."

"I do like, and if your majesty will graciously condescend to finish the boat and give me a day or two's holiday, I'll just roam about this island, and see if I can't turn up a nugget."

"You won't do that. Gold is only deposited in the shape of dust in these islands," Jack replied.

"All right. I'll have a go in and chance it. I want to make a pile, and when I've got a belt full, I'll cry a go, as they say at cribbage."

"Cut along at once, then, Dick. I'll see to the boat, and dodge that up all serene, for I want to be off at once."

"At once?" asked Harvey, who saw that Jack's manner was urgent.

"Oh, I don't suppose a day or two will make much difference, but I'm anxious. It's some time now since Hunston hooked it off with the Tuan Biza, and he'll be back again without letting the grass grow under his feet."

"He can't hurt us. I wouldn't give a rap off a common for him and his niggers," said Harvey.

After the way in which the blackskins were beaten off in the last attack, Harvey had got into this manner of deriding them.

"You hold them too cheap," exclaimed Jack. "But it doesn't matter. If you must go gold-seeking, go, though you'd get more by raking this dust up."

Harvey would have his own way, however, and, armed with a pistol, in case of accidents, he started on his journey.

He fancied that if they could find deposits of gold on the sands, they would certainly discover lumps inland.

Jack had given him his opinion upon the subject, and, muttering to himself—"I suppose he'll be back when he's tired of it," went on with his work.

By evening the boat was ready for launching, and, knocking away some supports, Jack and Monday, with a good English hurrah, let her slide into the dock they had dug for her.

This dock communicated with the sea, and all they had to do, when they wanted to start, was to push her along till they got clear.

Monday said that he knew a break in the coral reef, which surrounded the island through which they could sail.

The next thing to do was to get in the cargo; but as it was growing late, Jack deferred this till the morrow.

"Where Mast' Harvey?" asked Monday, as he shouldered some tools to take back to the castle.

"Oh! he's up at the castle, I should think," answered Jack. "Perhaps he thought we should have returned before this."

"S'pose him got much big gold lump!" cried Monday, with a smile.

"You heard my opinion, Monday. What is your experience?"

"All dust—no much good—no lump. Poor Mast' Harvey! How him grin wrong side of him face!" replied Monday laughing.

They entered the castle, and Jack was surprised, and not a little alarmed, to see nothing of Harvey, who certainly ought to have returned before this.

Jack's first thought was that the savages had landed again, this time under the command of Hunston. If so, Harvey would fall an easy prey to them, as he was wandering about the island.

"You stop here, Monday," he said, shouldering his rifle, "and I will take a stroll."

"What for you go?" asked Monday.

"I can't make out what has come to Harvey. I must look for him. I don't take kindly to sitting at home when a friend may want my services."

"Me go with you?" asked Monday.

"No! Stop at home, and keep a sharp look-out. Shoot at the first darkskin you see!"

Monday was already too well trained to dispute his masters will.

Jack set out alone.

Not knowing in what direction he was likely to find Harvey, he wandered about in much perturbation of spirit.

"I'd rather have my right hand cut off," he muttered, "than any harm should happen to Dick!"

And he was sincere in what he said.

The purest and most romantic friendship existed between the two boys, which had been strengthened by their solitary exile.

He might have walked for half-a-dozen miles in the interior of the island, when he came to a barren plain, which he had never remarked before.

The volcano mountain towered high into the clouds behind him.

Not a shrub or a blade of grass was to be seen on this desolate plain.

Sulphurous gases appeared in the moonlight to arise from fissures and holes in the earth.

The ground was of a pale grey or yellowish colour.

Avoiding the steaming gases, Jack walked a little way along the valley.

On all sides of him he saw a number of dead animals of various kinds.

Deer, tigers, birds, and even snakes spread their ghastly skeletons upon the ground.

All these had lost their lives in the fatal place. It was a veritable Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Sulphuric acid gas broke out under his feet, and he retreated, half suffocated by the noxious vapour.

This it was which had caused such certain destruction to all the animals he saw lying around him, who had wandered thither.

The soft parts of many of the dead victims, as the skin, muscles, hair, or feathers, were entire, but the bones had partially crumbled.

No fabled upas-tree could have worked more or swifter desolation.

The smell of the gas which assailed Jack's nostrils was just like the smoke of a common lucifer match when first struck.

It may be readily imagined how dangerous and poisonous it was.

This vapour was generated under the mountain, and when the volcano was not in action, it escaped through the earth as we have described.

Just as Jack was hastily turning round to retrace his steps, a dim object on his right caught his eye.

It had the form of a man, and was stretched out on the ground.

"Can that be Dick?" was the exclamation that involuntarily escaped him.

Making a circuit to avoid a dense volume of gas which came up from a hole, he approached the singular object.

A glance sufficed to show him that it was Harvey.

He was lying on his back, and though breathing, seemed to be perfectly stupefied and insensible.

It was no time for deliberation or hesitating.

Jack himself felt dizzy, and was sure that if he remained long in that dreadful valley he would sink down like his friend, probably to rise no more.

Tightly clenched in Harvey's hand was the end of a large lump of gold.

The glitter of this piece of precious metal had probably attracted him.

Gas might have broken out near him and caused him to fall down half suffocated, for the deadly vapour springs out at all times from all sorts of fissures, and does not steadily emanate from any particular one.

Jack put the gold in his pocket.

It was, from its appearance and weight, worth some hundreds of pounds, and quite a rarity in that region.

At all events he considered it a windfall for Harvey, which would prove most acceptable to him if he should ever return to civilised life again.

It would be hard indeed to lose it after having risked so much to obtain it.

When he had secured the lump of gold, Jack seized Harvey in his arms, and with a desperate exercise of strength, carried him away from the valley.

Several times he stopped and staggered like a drunken man, for the pestilential gas assailed him, and very nearly subdued his energy.

At length the end of the open and blighted space was reached.

Reeling a few yards further, Jack let his friend sink to the ground on the grass, which even here was sparse and stunted.

The blight of the Valley of Death had tainted it.

Now Jack could understand how animals coming into this dreadful space sank down to die.

Now he could imagine birds flying over it compelled to flutter to the earth in deadly agony.

Now he could conceive a horrid serpent, which had crawled to the fatal precinct to enjoy the promised heat, inhaling the poison rising from the earth, and twisting about in useless contortions.

He always carried a little flask of brandy in his pocket in case of an emergency like the present arising, and he poured a few drops down Harvey's throat.

It stimulated the action of the heart, which was beating slowly.

Presently he opened his eyes, and stared wildly round him.

"Is it you, Jack?" he gasped.

"Yes, Dick. It's all right. Do you feel better?" replied Jack.

"I'm getting better; but I've had a dream. I thought someone was choking me with the smoke of matches. How was it?"

"You went after some gold, didn't you?" said Jack, trying to help his memory.

"That's it. I was going home, as it was getting dark, and I had found nothing, when I saw something glittering in the imperfect light, on a dry-looking plain."

"It was lucky I came up when I did. You could not have lived long there."

"It wasn't more than half-an-hour ago. I remember picking up the gold. Such a whopping big lump! and then this beastly smoke I tell you about came up. I tried to run, but couldn't; and then I went to sleep, dreaming this horrid dream."

"That is the valley of poison. It is full of deadly gases, and nothing can live long upon it."

"I have heard of such places near the base of volcanoes. But how can I thank you, Jack, for rescuing me?"

"Perhaps you'll have a chance some day of doing as much for me."

"Won't I, that's all! Give us another pull out of the flask, and I shall be as right as a trivet," replied Harvey who was rapidly regaining his strength.

"I couldn't rest," continued Jack, handing him the brandy, "when I found you did not come home. That there was something wrong, I felt positive."

"You thought the niggers had got me."

"I did."

"By the way," exclaimed Harvey. "where's the bullion? Was it bullion, or was that part of the dream?"

"No, here it is. I collared that at the time I rescued you, and a very tidy-sized lump it is."

Harvey clutched it eagerly.

"This is worth running a little risk for. It must be worth a lot," he said, gazing at it with admiration.

"It may lay the foundation of your fortune if ever we get back again to England."

"Tell you what, Jack," said Harvey. "I'll give it to you. After what you've done for me, I ought to think more of my life being saved than what good money will do for me. Take it, old fellow, and my love with it."

Jack was much affected by this proof of his friend's generosity of heart, and liberality.

"Keep it, Dick," he replied, "though I thank you all the same. As you reminded me this morning, I have plenty. My father's well enough off."

"Won't you have it?"

"No. It's all your own, Dick."

Harvey reluctantly put the gold in his pocket, and, leaning on Jack's arm, they returned to the castle, where the faithful Monday was anxiously awaiting their coming.

From the account Harvey gave of his adventure as they went along, Jack gathered that he had not long been insensible in the valley.

The jet of gas which had assailed him had darted suddenly out of the earth, and as quickly died away again.

If it had continued, life must have been speedily extinguished.

Those fumes are for ever rising and vanishing all over the fatal spot, and sweeping hither and thither in white, dense clouds.

It was a narrow escape, and one for which the companions were both deeply grateful.

That night Harvey did not forget to say his prayers, which he uttered with rather more than his usual earnestness.

A little danger is sometimes a wholesome stimulus to our devotion, and to the proper regulation of our thoughts.

It checks our pride, and makes us remember what helpless creatures we really are.

The next day was occupied in taking stores to the boat.

She was carefully laden, and moored near the signal station, so that all the crew had to do was to jump in, and push off.

The wind being rather high, the boys deferred their departure for a few days.

This delay gave rise to a peril which, though not unexpected, came upon them with all the severity of a surprise.

CHAPTER XXXI.

BURNING OF THE CASTLE.

As we have stated, all was in readiness for the voyage to Limbi.

Jack was only waiting for the wind to lull a little, as he did not deem it prudent to embark in half a gale with a roughly-made and heavily-laden boat.

The stores which they had placed on board were chiefly guns, powder, and shot.

Both Harvey and Jack were sorry to leave the castle, where they had spent some pleasant months; though Maple's death, and Hunston's desertion, with Mr. Mole's sad end, had damped their enjoyment.

Trouble, however, makes people selfish.

They thought a good deal of themselves, and saw the necessity of making some move, unless they wanted to spend their remaining days on the island.

This was not an agreeable prospect to high-spirited boys, who wished to take their places in the world once more, and rise amongst their fellows.

Monday was delighted at the chance of seeing his friends and relations again.

"My father prince. Much great chief," he said.

"Is he the king of Limbi?" asked Jack.

"Yes; him king. Tuan Biza. Great chief, we call him."

"Will he make us welcome?"

"You save Matabella's life. That me—Monday," replied the black. "He much thank for saving Matabella—him only son."

"What's your governor's name, Monday?" inquired Jack.

"Lanindyer, him call."

"That's a nice crackjaw name. I suppose you'll be king some day?"

"No. Make Master Jack king. Monday be him servant, as he is now."

"Oh, so you want me to be your king. All right," replied Jack; "I'll astonish the natives."

"Lead them against Pisang with shotgun, and make Limbi one big, great peoples, with plenty heads," said Monday.

"I won't have any head-hunting. Drop that idea," Jack said.

Monday looked contrite, and said that he had forgotten for the moment that head-hunting was wrong.

"You no fight. No war where you come from in big canoe?" queried Monday.

"Well, yes, we fight when we're attacked," replied Jack.

"So we do. No 'tack, no fight. Live quiet at Limbi, if Pisang not come take head."

Jack did not care to continue the conversation, because he knew, from what he had read of the history of his own and other countries, that the European nations had waged wars as dreadful as any fought by the savages of the Eastern Archipelago.

"Monday," he cried, "get the guns ready. I am going to have one more ramble over the island before we leave it—perhaps for ever."

"Happy have we been, and happy may we be," remarked Harvey. "I like this jolly old place."

"So do I; but it does not do to stagnate and stand still. We must push on, Dick," said Jack.

"So we must, and I wonder where we shall push to at last."

Harvey was in a tearful mood at the prospect of leaving the island, but Jack shouldered the rifle Monday brought him.

"Are you coming?" he said to Harvey.

"Of course I am. You don't think I'm going to shirk behind when there is sport going on," replied the latter.

"Give me a gun, you, Monday."

"Yes," replied Monday, handing him one.

"What did I tell you to call me?" asked Harvey, severely.

"Sare. I forget, sare."

"No; it wasn't 'sare' either. It was sir. So don't you forget another time or——"

He lifted his foot threateningly.

Monday grinned, and showed his white gleaming teeth.

"No kickee, sare. No kickee poor Monday," he cried.

"Well, I won't this time; but I will have proper respect paid to one who was until lately an officer in the British mercantile marine. That licks you, old sharpshins, doesn't it?"

"Yes, Mast' Harvey, that one lick for me," replied Monday, who only yet imperfectly understood the slang terms of his young masters.

"That's what you may call a lick for the mind, and it's better than a lick on the head," said Harvey, laughing.

Jack now led the way into the interior of the island, but they did not see anything to shoot at.

After walking some distance, they felt tired, and lay down under a spreading palm tree, while Monday knocked down some clusters of the rich, ripe cocoanuts.

They were filled with a deliciously cool water, which was peculiarly grateful to them during the noontide heat.

"We shall get a shot or two when the sun goes down," remarked Jack.

"Everything has gone to sleep now, and I'm going to follow everything's example," replied Harvey.

"You always were a lazy beggar, Dick."

"Why shouldn't I be? I hate taking trouble, and if this climate wouldn't make a fellow lazy, I should like to know what would."

"Monday," exclaimed Jack, "where's the powder flask?"

"Is it him powdare? Monday been and forgot him," answered the black.

"Oh, have you? then you'll have to tramp back to the castle and get it."

"Well, I'm blowed," exclaimed Harvey "you're a nice young man for a small tea-party, up Islington way, I don't think."

"Let him alone; walking to the castle and back will be a sufficient punishment for him without bullying," cried Jack.

Monday did not wait to be told twice; he set off at a jog trot to the castle to repair his forgetfulness.

"How the fellow runs," remarked Harvey, "I couldn't cut out the pace like that if anyone paid me for it."

Without appearing to put himself to any great exertion, Monday could run a mile in about seven or eight minutes.

Half an hour elapsed, during which time the boys remained in the shade.

Then Monday was seen coming back with the wings of the wind.

"He's running full tilt," said Jack. "It's wonderful. I believe he's going quicker now than when he started."

Monday came up, but with his hands empty; he had no powder with him though he had been sent expressly for it.

His manner was agitated, and his breast heaved with exertion.

For some moments he was unable to speak.

"Something's up," observed Harvey.

"Yes, he's had a scare," answered Jack, "and he's forced the running to such an extent that he is pumped out—can't find wind enough to speak with."

"Shall I stir him up?"

"If you like."

Harvey gave him a dig in the ribs and a slap on his back.

"Wake up, you imp of blackness," he exclaimed. "Have you seen your own face in a pool of water, or discovered that there is a strong family likeness between your nose and a parrot's beak? Speak, you sable duffer, and put us out of our misery at once!"

"Oh, Mast' Jack ! oh, Mast' Harvey ! " was all he could reply.

"Oh, oh ! " repeated Harvey. "If you go on like that we shall take you for a West-end swell who has got into debt and 'Oh's' everybody."

"Be quiet, Dick. There's something serious about this," said Jack. "Keep a look-out ; he may be pursued, or perhaps he's wounded."

Harvey grew grave as this view of the case was presented to him.

It was not at all unlikely that he had seen some of his old enemies, with Hunston at their head.

He waited eagerly for the black to speak, which he did as soon as he could command his voice.

"Oh, sare ! " he exclaimed, addressing himself to Jack, "Oh, such a sight ! Ten, twenty, hundred Pisang on island ! The Tuan Biza and white man with the strange face, both near the castle."

"He means Hunston," said Harvey.

"No doubt," answered Jack, turning pale, and setting his teeth together, which was a way he had when anything put him out. "Go on, Monday."

"They take much thing out of castle and pile in heap. Many Pisang drink much strong wine, spirit. They sing ; they dance."

"Getting drunk, eh ? " remarked Harvey. "They've not lost any time over it."

"White man with the fancy face——" continued Monday.

"Fancy face ! " repeated Harvey, laughing. "That's not bad. Monday makes shots at his English, but he's hit the mark this time. Hunston's mug is of a fancy character. You might say of it, 'He was all my fancy painted him.'"

"Let Monday speak ! " cried Jack, in a rage at his companion's thoughtless interruptions. "We can't afford to lose valuable time with your confounded interruptions."

"All right, I'll subside. Monday, proceed," answered Harvey, who never disputed Jack's will.

"White man with the face," continued Monday. "Him take stick from a fire, which some Pisangs make, and throw it into the castle. Soon it all one much large blaze."

"They've burnt the castle, Dick ! " said Jack.

"Blow them!" was all Harvey could say.

"White man take more fire and throw it in the corn," Monday went on. "Soon it all one big smoke, fire. White man do everything. All Pisangs look to him as if he great chief. Oh! how all burn. The Pisangs—they dance, they laugh and drink, and the white man, he much grin like me when I cut off my first head."

It was clear, from Monday's confused account, that Hunston had suddenly landed on the island, with an overwhelming force of savages.

These were buoyed up by the hope of plunder, and burning, no doubt, to have revenge for the death of friends and relatives who had fallen by Jack's rifle in the late attack.

How Hunston felt towards him, Jack knew well enough.

Hunston was sufficiently vindictive to wish that Jack had half a dozen lives, that he might take them cruelly, one after the other.

The enemy was on the island.

They were dancing even then round the burning castle.

The corn, upon which the boys had intended to subsist when the ship's provisions were exhausted, was in flames.

All the havoc and mischief of which savages are capable was accomplished in a few brief hours.

No wonder that a sigh escaped Jack at the distressing news brought him by Monday.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A GHOST FROM THE GRAVE.

"THIS is bad news," said Harvey, dolefully.

"Not so bad as it might have been had we been caught napping," replied Jack.

"Fancy our dear old castle being burnt. But after all it does not matter so much, as we were going to cut our stick and leave it. Hunston does not know that we have our boat ready."

"His plan is to destroy everything we have belonging to us and condemn us to starvation. He would like to see us wandering about with no powder and shot to kill

our food or protect us from the wild beasts, and no roof to shelter us—that's his game."

"And a villanous plot it is too."

"So long as our boat is not discovered, it is all right. If they find that, Heaven help us!" said Jack.

"What's that?" cried Harvey.

All listened intently.

A loud noise, coming from the direction of the castle, was heard.

It resembled a clap of distant thunder.

"I think I can explain that," said Jack, with a smile.

"How?" asked Harvey.

"You remember what I called the magazine?"

"The hole in the warehouse, in which you put the kegs of powder?"

"Exactly. After stowing away as much as I could in the boat, there still remained a considerable quantity."

"I see," cried Harvey. "The flames have caught it, and there has been an explosion. What a jolly lark! I hope some of the noble savages have copped it hot."

"So do I, and Hunston into the bargain. You may depend it has done some damage. But now to get off the island. We must make the attempt, wind or no wind."

"I shan't bother myself to sweat about till the sun goes down," Harvey said with a yawn.

"Be firm, Dick; no foolishness," cried Jack, in a tone of encouragement. "Every hour we stay here is fraught with peril, and though our enemies are savages, we can't afford to despise them, more especially as they are led by Hunston."

"I wish Hunston was afflicted with all the plagues of Egypt. What a nuisance the brute is, bothering us like this."

Turning to Monday, Jack continued—

"What do you say?"

The black had been listening to their conversation attentively.

"Me say, go now. No wait for night. When him dark, um boat not go easy through the reef," replied Monday.

"Your opinion and mine are alike," answered Jack. "We will get down to the coast, going as cautiously as we can and if we meet with the Pisangs as Monday calls

them, we must either show them a clean pair of heels or make the best fight we can."

"I don't like the idea of running away from niggers," replied Harvey.

"Neither do I, but there is no help for it," answered Jack.

"Let us go in Indian file. I'll take the lead. Monday shall be in the middle, and you bring up the rear, Dick."

They started in this order, and walked at a quick pace, in spite of the sun's heat to the sea-shore.

Each kept his eye on the alert, in case of a surprise and to avoid the castle and the savages they made a considerable circuit.

They reached the boat, which was lying in the water, concealed under some rocks, near the place where the boys had first landed and Jack had taken possession of the island in the name of the Queen.

He wished now that he had placed the little vessel in another spot, as she was too near Hunston and his savages to make her builders feel comfortable. As they passed within half a mile of the castle, a thick smoke apprised them of the truth of Monday's story.

Desolation, wrought by fire, reigned in the once happy spot, where the boys might have dwelt peacefully had it not been for Hunston's wicked passions.

Creeping cautiously through the forest, they reached the skirts, and a long tract of rank grass, fringed towards the sea with sand, stretched down to the shore.

Hitherto they had not had much cause for apprehension, as the trees in the woods had sheltered them.

But now the case was altered.

If the savages had spread themselves over that part of the island, as there was every reason to believe, they might observe the fugitives as they crossed the open space.

"Halt," said Jack, in a low tone.

Harvey joined him, and Monday stood still, scouring the plain with his quick eyes.

The explosion, for such it was, had done considerable damage.

Hunston had never been allowed to go into the warehouse, and therefore did not know where the powder was kept.

He had, when the castle was taken possession of, searched everywhere for it.

His hunt had been unsuccessful.

A case of spirits was found, and a cask of wine.

As is usual in such cases, the marauders had all helped themselves to some intoxicating liquors.

Not being accustomed to such strong drinks, the Pisangs became uproarious.

They danced, and sang, and went roaring and bellowing about.

Their leaders were unable to control them.

They yelled for heads, and demanded to be led against Jack and Harvey.

Of Monday's existence they knew nothing.

Hunston's annoyance at not finding the powder was very great.

It is true he had captured a large stand of arms, but the guns were useless without powder.

Suddenly the explosion took place.

The savages were dancing round the burning castle, unsuspecting of danger.

Several were killed when the magazine was blown up.

Hunston was thrown on his back, and much hurt.

His face was getting well, for, to his great joy, he found the dye used by the natives in tattooing him was *not lasting*.

The marks were gradually dying out.

Every day they grew fainter.

There was a prospect of his recovering his usual appearance in a few months.

The explosion, however, blackened his face and singed his hair, making him look hideous.

Roaring with rage, he rose to his feet, dizzy, and looking unutterably hideous and ferocious.

While Jack was on the lookout he saw some one crossing the sandy plain between himself and the sea.

"Dick," he exclaimed, "who is that?—his face is white!"

"Blessed if I know. It isn't Hunston; but, as you say, it is a white man," answered Harvey.

"Cover me well with your rifle," continued Jack; "and you, Monday, do the same. Fire if you see me in any danger. I am going to reconnoitre."

He stepped into the open.

"Who goes there?" he exclaimed.

A well-known voice replied—

"A friend."

Jack advanced boldly.

The next moment he was face to face with the intruder.

The latter was tall and gaunt, his hair hung down his neck in tangled locks, his clothes, which were of European cut, were tattered and torn, and his broad-brimmed straw hat had more than one rent in it.

"Why, bless me! it is—and yet it can't be! Is it Mr. Mole?" cried Jack.

"My dear boy!" replied the voice of Mr. Mole. "It is indeed I. No wonder you do not recognize me."

"But I thought you fell down the mountain and perished in the eruption," said Jack, beside himself with amazement.

"I did fall down, but only a little way. Providence was good to me. I climbed up again, but in seeking to rejoin you I lost my way, and fell into the hands of the savages."

"It's a wonder they did not have your head."

"I am indebted to Hunston for my life. The savages intended me for a grand sacrifice, but Hunston, who seems to have acquired great influence with the savages, caused them to spare me," replied Mr. Mole.

"And since then?"

"Since then they have made me their slave. I have been a hewer of wood and a drawer of water. Truly my lot was hard."

"Where did they keep you?"

"They took me in a boat to the island of Pisang," said Mr. Mole. "But though absent in the body, in spirit I have been with you."

"Well this is the most out-and-out extraordinary thing I ever heard of!" cried Jack. "Dash my buttons! I can scarcely believe it. We have been mourning you as dead."

"How are Harvey and Maple?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Dick's all right, and is hiding in the wood. Maple is dead. But am I to regard you as a friend or an enemy?" replied Jack, with a look of distrust.

"As a friend. It is true that your castle is burnt, and

that the island swarms with your enemies the Pisangs; you will be hunted, even to the death, I fear, yet will I not desert you. Isaac Mole's heart is in the right place."

"Things are not quite so dicky as you imagine," Jack said, with a smile.

"Did you know the castle was burnt and that the Pisangs had landed in force?"

"I did."

"You are on your guard?"

"Rather," replied Jack. "I have too much regard for my head to let Hunston steal a march upon me. By the way, how is he?"

"Getting better. It was a cruel joke you played him, and his phiz looked so comical when he came to Pisang that I laughed in derision, whereupon he kicked me—me Isaac Mole—upon my seat of honour."

"Just like him."

"How did Maple die?"

"You heard of the attack on the castle, which failed?"

"Yes."

"Maple betrayed us, and joined the enemy; but his treachery cost him his life."

"He was always of a shifty disposition. I will not let fall a tear to his memory," said Mr. Mole, "nor would I to that of Hunston, should vengeance overtake him, for he hath used me sorely and his kicks rankle in my mind."

"Look here, Mr. Mole," said Jack. "This is a critical time, but you have always acted like a gentleman, and I esteem you for it."

"Thank you, Harkaway."

"There is my hand on it."

"I grasp it as that of an honest man," said Mr. Mole, as they shook hands.

"I can't tell whether you mean to betray us or not. If you try it on, I shall feel no compunction in shooting you like a dog. I am, however, disposed to trust you. You think our position desperate, yet you have offered to join us?"

"Verily I will cast in my lot with you. Hunston is an arrogant upstart. There was over much liquor found in the castle but to me he denied a drop, when I would fain have solaced myself with a gill of brandy, and he allowed

his friends the savages to wallow in Martell's best and Kinahan's LL whisky, like the swine they are."

"I've got whisky, and I've got powder and shot," said Jack, "so come on."

"Believe me or not," continued Mr. Mole, "it was my intention in seeking you—for I did set forth to seek you—to warn you of your danger, and I thanked Heaven when I found you were not at home at the castle."

"It is lucky, perhaps," answered Jack.

"Hunston has promised your head and that of Harvey to the Pisangs, and you are to be killed, with great pomp and display."

"*When* captured," repeated Jack. "It is as well to catch your hare before you think of cooking it. But come on. It is not safe to stand here."

"Lead, Harkaway. I will follow you, for you were always a brave boy. Your country shall be my country, as the Scripture hath it, for truly my spirit is much vexed with over serving," answered Mr. Mole.

Jack, looking cautious'y around him to prevent a surprise, led the way back to the wood, where he had left Harvey and the black.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MR. MOLE'S VALOUR.

THE singular meeting between Jack and Mr. Mole was like an incident in a romance.

His story, however, was intelligible enough.

He had struck upon a ledge in the uneven shaft of the crater of the mountain.

By dint of great energy and perseverance he succeeded in reaching the top once more.

His companions had gone away, giving him up for lost.

Losing his way in trying to retrace his steps to the castle, he had been captured by the Tuan Biza and his band.

The savages would have eventually killed him, had not Hunston interposed in his behalf.

For two days before he was captured, Mr. Mole had wandered about, lost, subsisting on such fruits as he could find.

Jack had always had a liking for his old master, and he was much pleased to meet with him again.

Harvey was as much surprised to see Mr. Mole as Jack had been.

"Is it a ghost?" he exclaimed. "Can I believe my eyes? Have you come back from the grave, sir?"

"No, my dear Harvey, I have been simply a servitor to a degraded race of negroes—I, the proprietor of a tea-garden in China have been beaten by them, and made to toil in the fields, while Hunston has amused himself by brutally kicking me," replied Mr. Mole.

He then briefly related his adventures, to which Harvey listened breathlessly.

"What made them bring you here to join in the attack on us?" asked Jack, who could talk more at his ease while concealed in the dense foliage of the wood.

"I was to be a decoy. I am even now sent out into the woods to find you, and throw you off your guard."

"And you accepted such a post?" cried Jack, eyeing him suspiciously.

Harvey grasped his rifle tighter.

"I did, though in my heart I secretly determined to warn you of your danger. It is not supposed that you knew of the landing and what has followed it," answered Mr. Mole.

"Did you see the explosion?"

"I did not. I came up at the sound, and found Hunston, who is much blackened by the powder, cursing like the Pagan he is at the disaster. He has guns in plenty, but no powder."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Jack, "I thought his lordship would be nicely done in that direction."

"Six Pisangs were killed by the explosion and five more wounded. The Tuan Biza raves like a maniac, and his amiable fellows call loudly for heads. What, my dear boys, shall you do, to avoid the cruel death that menaces you?"

"Step it," replied Jack.

"Whither?"

"Across the wild sea."

"You cannot swim the distance," said Mr. Mole, doubtfully.

"I don't mean to try, but our name is Walker before

another hour is over. We meant to hook it to-day, and all our preparations are made."

"Indeed! may I inquire the nature of your conveyance and your destination?"

"We have a boat, and were going to Limbi, that's the name of the crib, isn't it, Monday?" said Jack.

"Him Limbi, safe enuf," answered the black, who had been hidden behind a tree.

"Dear me," exclaimed Mr. Mole, "is that a friendly black? He gave me quite a turn. I thought he was a Pisang. They all have a family likeness."

"He is Monday."

"And why Monday?"

"Because we found him on a Saturday," said Jack, laughing.

"That is an absurd reason. I am, however, content to know that he is not an Amalekite, that is to say a Pisang. But I will also make a joke. When you get to Limbi, mind you don't find yourselves in limbo."

"Not bad for Mole, eh, Dick?" remarked Jack, with a smile.

"He's improving," answered Harvey.

"You may make as many bad puns as you like, sir," exclaimed Jack; "we're too glad to have you amongst us again to find fault with anything you do or say."

"Harkaway, you're a good boy," replied Mr. Mole, much touched with his kindness; "you have placed me under several obligations to you at various times, and I shall esteem it a favour if you can give me to drink a small portion of your spirituous liquor."

"Here's my flask, lay hold, and don't pitch into it too hard," answered Jack.

Mr. Mole snatched it eagerly, and a quick gurgling sound was soon audible.

"The patriarch was right when he said that wine, whereby he meant fermented liquid generally, as well as distillations, gladdens the heart of man," remarked Mr. Mole.

Again he raised the bottle to his lips.

A second time was the gurgling audible.

"Dash my wig," exclaimed Jack; "you'd drink the sea dry, sir, if it was filled with gin and water."

"No water, Harkaway. I abominate adulteration, and will take my stand on pure spirit."

"You won't stand at all, if you don't watch it. Give me my flask. Well, I'll be hanged if it isn't empty," exclaimed Jack, regarding the bottle.

"Now," said Mr. Mole valiantly, "I have courage. Show me the villain Hunston, and give me a sword that I may hew him in pieces."

"Here's a pistol, sir," replied Harvey, handing him a revolver, "mind you shoot straight."

"I am incapable of a crooked action. I hope you believe that I am thoroughly incapable of a crooked action. 'True as steel' is my motto, and I have resolved to defend you poor helpless boys against the savages who are thirsting for your blood," Mr. Mole rejoined.

Harvey laughed.

The late senior master at Pomona House rolled his eyes in a peculiar manner, and staggered a little bit on one side.

"How infinitely superior is the brandy of the Christian," he observed, "to the calm spirit of the savages, in which I indulged deeply this morning on the sly. But my heart is good; lead me against the Pisangs. I burn to avenge my slavery, and to strike a blow for the liberty of my friends."

"I wish you'd talk less and do more," exclaimed Jack. "Look alive, sir, and just put a stopper on your tongue till we're afloat, then you may jaw for a month if you choose."

Thus rebuked Mr. Mole was silent.

Jack gave his orders, and soon the little party were engaged in crossing the open space, to gain the boat, which was concealed under the rock about half a mile off.

A path led down from the rocks to the sea-shore, and when the commencement of this was reached, Jack, who led, and was some yards in advance, looked below.

In an instant he held up his hand.

This was a signal.

Harvey halted and did the same.

Mr. Mole and Monday, who followed, imitated his example.

Each looked to his weapons.

"Monday," observed Mr. Mole, "I perceive that you have attached yourself to the white people, and I trust you are prepared to acquit yourself like a man."

"Monday fight till no use fight no more. Then he run 'way," replied the black.

"A very sage native, upon my word," remarked Mr. Mole. "There is more wisdom in you, Monday, than I thought there was. You mean to do the very thing I had intended to do myself."

"What good one fight twenty? What use um die? No more brandy drink," Monday said, grinning.

"My worthy black creature," Mr. Mole answered, gravely, "you are facetious, but you must not make jokes at my expense, or I shall, as my friend Harkaway would put it, be under the painful necessity of tanning you. hide, though nature and the hot sun of the tropics have done that pretty effectually already."

"Mast Mole, mind um pistol," exclaimed Monday, as Jarvey made a second signal to them to be on the alert.

"Do you think there will be any fighting, my sable friend?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Some Pisangs not far off. Much fight soon."

"Ah, dear me! I perceive a small rocky fissure in the sand. I will step within it. Tell me, my good blackskin, when the fighting is over."

In fact, there happened to be just in front of Mr. Mole an inequality in the ground, which he called a rocky fissure.

It was, however, nothing of the sort.

Jack had dug a hole in the sand to serve as a rifle-pit, from which he could fire at the enemy, and be concealed himself if he should be attacked.

Into this Mr. Mole crept.

He was securely hidden in the hole.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ESCAPING FROM THE ISLAND.

MONDAY was much incensed at what he considered Mr. Mole's cowardice.

"Sare!" he exclaimed; "you sare! Come out dat. Won't you help fight? Come out dat hole, sare!"

"Not if I know it, my amiable negro," replied Mr. Mole.

"You want this hole yourself, but I've been too quick for you. I shall relinquish this hole to no man breathing. Not much!"

We must now describe what had excited Jack's alarm.

The path in the rock was about five-and-twenty yards in length.

Immediately below lay the boat.

To his surprise, he beheld six Pisangs standing near her.

They had evidently not been there long, for they were talking rapidly, and making wild gestures as if pleased with their discovery.

Two were overhauling the stores, though they did not attempt to remove anything.

If the savages took possession of the boat, Jack knew that his doom was sealed.

It was a time for action.

Retreating a few steps, he was joined by Harvey.

"What is it, old fellow?" asked the latter. "You look as if you had found sixpence and lost a shilling."

"The Pisangs have found the boat."

"Nonsense!"

"They have, though," replied Jack.

"How many of them are there down there?"

"Six. Come and look."

"Six!" repeated Harvey. "That's three to one."

"You forget Mole."

"Oh! Mole's an old woman. He don't count. And besides, he's been swigging the natives' palm spirit till he's top-heavy, and your brandy will about settle him."

"I wish we hadn't met him. He'll only be in the way. Yet we must not grumble. It will be a charity to get him away from the Tuan Biza and Hunston," said Jack.

The boys approached the edge of the cliff and looked down.

They retreated almost immediately.

One of the Pisangs was ascending the winding-path.

"He's going to tell his friends of the find they've made," said Harvey.

"That's just my idea. Stand fast, Dick, and back me up like brick. I don't like taking a man's life, but it's a case with us, if I don't stop this cove."

"We shall all be up a gum tree if he gets away. Shall I tackle him?" replied Harvey.

"No. Leave him to me."

"Shall you shoot?"

Jack replied by drawing a case-knife from its sheath.

"It'll be a rough and tumble, but I shall have the best of it, as he will be taken by surprise. If you see me getting worst off, shoot, Dick."

"Never fear."

Harvey laid down on his side, and Jack crawled on his hands and knees to the edge of the cliff, with the knife opened, and held between his teeth.

He did not want to shoot if he could help it, as the noise of the shot would arouse the attention of the main body of the savages.

The messenger must, however, be stopped at all hazards.

Scarcely allowing himself to breathe Jack crouched as he waited for his enemy.

The inhabitants of Pisang Island had come over under Hunston's leadership to attack him, and were even then searching for him, to cut off his head.

Could he be blamed for taking life in self-defence?

A few moments of breathless expectation.

Then a head appeared above the summit of the cliff.

This was followed by the shoulders of the native.

Stretching out his arm, Jack threw it round the man's neck.

He drew him forward with a hug like that of a bear.

"How do you find yourself, old boy?" he said gleefully.

The Pisang turned his eyes upon him, filled with a look of deadly terror.

Jack's grasp tightened.

The native laid on his back.

Disengaging one hand, Jack, took the knife from his mouth and plunged it into his body, burying it up to the hilt.

The native made a convulsive spring.

Thinking that all was over, Jack had relaxed his grasp, which allowed the spasmodic effort of the native to jerk his body over the cliff.

He rolled down a corpse.

When his body fell at the feet of his companions they crowded round him gazing at him with wonder not unmixed with terror.

This passed away, and raising a horrible war-whoop, they looked upwards for their enemies.

"I managed that badly," said Jack, "but it can't be helped. Call up Mole and Monday, Dick, and follow my fire."

Selecting the most prominent of the natives, Jack discharged his rifle.

The fellow started forward and fell dead on his face.

The Pisangs began to run.

"Fire, Dick, fire," cried Jack while he reloaded.

Harvey took a steady aim, and a native fell to the earth biting the sand in his death agony.

By this time Jack was ready to discharge his piece a second time.

A fourth native fell.

Monday came up and also fired his piece, but the two remaining Pisangs, running with incredible celerity, were out of danger.

"Now for it, Dick," exclaimed Jack, "it's no use following those two skunks. We could couldn't catch them if we did."

"What shall we do?"

"Get down to the boat and make a start; the wind is still blowing stiffly from the shore, though not so roughly as it did this morning; now then, Monday, down with you; look slippery, Dick. I'll bring up the rear."

"Where's Mole?" asked Harvey.

"Mr. Mole, where are you, sir!" cried Jack. "We're off, come along."

A head appeared above the sand.

"I—I felt a little faint, Harkaway," said Mr. Mole in a confused voice. "But I'm all right now."

"Come on then," exclaimed Jack.

Harvey and Monday were already half-way down the cliff, slipping along like wild-cats.

Jack followed them.

They knew that their lives depended upon their speed.

The Pisangs had come over in boats, and they could follow them, and perhaps there would be a battle on the sea.

A hundred Pisangs, in perhaps ten boats, would be a formidable fleet to attack or resist.

Mr. Mole emerged from his place of concealment, and looking round him, saw nobody.

"Oh! Jack, good Jack, don't leave me," he exclaimed, "I'm taken very bad all at once; don't leave me, Jack." There was no answer.

"Harkaway, my dear boy, this is wrong," he continued. "I am one of you. I have joined you, and yet you desert me. Why, where the deuce have they gone? Have they found a hole as well as I?"

He ran to the edge of the cliff, and looking down, saw them already in the boat.

Harvey was in the middle, setting the sail; Monday stood at the bow, with a paddle in his hand; and Jack manfully grasped the tiller.

"Whoa!" cried Mr. Mole. "I say, hold hard. I'm coming. Whoa, there! Whoa!"

In his hurry to get down the cliff, he missed his footing after he had gone a few yards.

This caused him to roll down very gracefully until he reached the bottom.

He was bruised and breathless.

Picking himself up with a naughty exclamation, he ran to the boat, and stepping into the water, crawled on board, and lay down exhausted at Jack's feet.

"Away we go. Bravo! Mole, you've done it. Off we are, Dick," cried Jack, in a loud voice.

"Right," replied Harvey, allowing the little sail to belly to the breeze.

"We've got the start of the wretches. Hurrah! Steady, Dick, steady," added Jack, as the heavily-laden craft heeled over a little.

"Steady she is," answered Harvey, slackening the sail.

"She'll weather it, sir. Bravo!" continued Jack.

"We've got our ballast on board," remarked Harvey, pointing to Mr. Mole.

The late senior master heard the observation.

"Ballast, Harvey, is not a fitting noun substantive to apply to me," he said.

"Got your wind again, sir, have you?"

"I thank Heaven for all its mercies, and that is one of them."

"You came down that hill with a fine run. It was a proper come down, sir," Harvey said, with a laugh.

"You may jeer, my young friend, but should the savages overtake you, I trust that my influence with them

may be sufficient to save your lives. Ballast, indeed ! A nice term to apply to one in my position. Ballast ! Well, it isn't worth talking about ; but I never was called ballast before—no, not even by the Pisangs," said Mr. Mole, in high dudgeon.

"I didn't mean any offence, sir."

"When none is meant, none is taken. I accept your apology, Harvey, and will you be good enough to ask your friend Harkaway for some stimulating beverage ? I bore myself bravely during the scrimmage, and I have reason to believe that one, at least, of the savages fell before my unerring aim."

"Not now, Mr. Mole," replied Jack, smiling in spite of his preoccupation ; "wait a bit, please, till we get clear of the reef."

"As you please, Harkaway. Can I make myself of any further use ? " said Mr. Mole with a sigh of resignation.

"Lie still where you are, that's all you can do."

"I should like Mr. Crawcour and all our old friends, if any of us reach England again, to know that I bore myself bravely, and did not shrink in the hour of danger."

"I'll see to that, sir. It shall be put down in my diary."

"With that promise I am content. Call upon me, Harkaway, when peril is pressing ; Mole will be to the fore."

"Right you are, sir. Steady, Monday ; mind the reef ! " replied Jack.

The boat was laden nearly to the water's edge.

She was now nearing the passage in the reef through which Monday intended to conduct her.

He lifted his paddle first one side, then the other, as he wanted Jack to steer.

It was evident that he had been in a boat before, and knew well how to handle one.

In five minutes she would be floating fairly on the open sea.

"I wonder," said Harvey, "where the boats of the Pisangs are ? "

Scarcely had he spoken when loud cries assailed his ears.

Turning round to look from whence they proceeded he saw a confused mass of men, about three hundred yards from the spot at which they had embarked.

Several boats, which he had not before noticed, were lying on the beach.

"What is it, Dick?" asked Jack, who could not turn his head round.

"Pisangs," answered Harvey, "and a jolly good heap of them too. They swarm like flies!"

"What are they doing?"

"Getting into their boats. They have unfortunately landed close to the castle, and, will be after us in a twinkling."

"Never mind; we shall be through the reef in a brace of shakes, and perhaps they don't know this opening."

"What a pity they don't! they must have come through it."

"Perhaps so," said Jack, thoughtfully; "at any rate we have one advantage over them. They have no guns, or, at least, if they have stolen ours, they have no powder; so we shall beat them that way."

"Keep um boat straight, Mast' Jack," replied Monday. The opening in the reef was reached.

As it was a very narrow channel and the wind was high, the utmost caution was necessary to steer clear.

Monday used his paddle in the water with great dexterity.

The surf ran up in a dangerous manner, but Jack did not allow the boat at any time to get broadside on, and so she did not ship a sea.

She rode gallantly upon the waves, and showed herself thoroughly seaworthy under good management.

Jack kept her well before the wind and she met the surf with her bows, stemming the tide beautifully.

"Well done, Mast' Jack," cried Monday, "that your sort, all ri' soon."

In the meantime the cries of the Pisangs redoubled.

They were rapidly taking to their boats.

The chase threatened to be a hot one.

Hunston's blackened figure was discernible in their midst, and from his frantic motions he appeared to be dreadfully annoyed at the escape of his former friends.

"There's Hunston," said Harvey, "I'd swear to his ugly mug in a thousand."

"If there's any mischief brewing he's sure to be in it," replied Jack.

"Don't he look wild that's all," continued Harvey.

"Perhaps he'll be wilder, when he sees us scudding before the wind, and finds that we've slipped our cable just in time to put him in the hole. Steady, Monday, that's it, my man; another moment, and we shall be clear," Jack exclaimed, in his usual tone of command.

They were half through the dangerous passage.

The enemy were in pursuit of them and a short time would decide their fate.

Several boats, manned by the enraged Pisangs, started in pursuit of Jack and his companions.

Their fury knew no bounds when they saw their prey escaping.

The explosion which had killed and disabled several of their number, had first of all put them out of temper.

Loss of the powder they had expected to capture, and without which their guns were of no use, made them worse.

The death of the larger part of the party who had discovered the boat did not tend to increase their good humour.

And the escape from the island of those whom they had regarded as their sure victims, put the finishing touch to their rage.

Hunston and Keyali were in the first two boats that went after the fugitives.

The Tuan Biza, and others, followed quickly.

Hunston had promised Keyali Jack's head, and as Keyali could not marry until he got a head belonging to somebody, he was very anxious to have it.

He had made sure of catching Jack on the island, and in his anger at being disappointed, he danced about in the boat at the risk of upsetting it.

Hunston had to remonstrate with him and make him sit down.

His loud cries and exclamations were heard by Jack and Harvey, who had learnt a good deal of the native language from Monday.

This was a natural consequence of teaching Monday English.

Mr. Mole also understood the language spoken by the Pisangs and Limbians owing to his having been a captive amongst the former.

The same tongue was common to both the tribes.

"I'll have your head!" shouted Jack, in derision, as his boat shot through the narrow opening in the reef.

He had heard Keyali's ravings, and meant to chaff him and Hunston.

But he spoke in the native language, so that he might be comprehended by both, as Hunston was by this time thoroughly well able to converse in the dialect.

"Take care we don't have yours," replied Hunston, shouting in the same loud tone.

"No fear, old boy," replied Jack.

"I don't know that," said Hunston.

"Take a fool's advice," continued Jack, "and don't come too near us. We've got guns and you haven't."

"What of that? We've got bows and arrows and speas, and our arrows can fly as straight as your shots."

"Perhaps, but they can't carry as far, and we shan't let you get within shot of us."

Hunston was silent.

He saw the force of the argument.

"Give me his head; you promised me his head, and Tecona, my beloved, will not be my wife till I get a head. I must, I will have his head?" Keyali continued to shout.

"Keep that great calf quiet, can't you?" cried Jack.

"He wants his rights."

"Then he'll have to want."

Harvey was hard at work setting the sails, and he had surprised Jack by rigging up a flying jib, which gave them an advantage over their pursuers, who only had a mainsail.

"Bravo, Dick!" exclaimed Jack, as the breeze caught her and she sped onward like a thing of life.

Monday stood at the bows till the boat was clear of the rocks.

Then he sat down and looked contentedly at their pursuers.

"They plenty of them, Mast' Jack," he said, with a long face.

"We shall be a match for them, Monday," replied Jack.

"Hope so, sare; no want lose head. I hear Keyali cry for you. He do same for me once; but I 'scape and you save me. Keyali have mine 'fore yours," said the goodhearted fellow.

"I'll take precious good care he don't have either," returned Jack, drily. "If he does, I'll forgive him. Which way shall I steer, Monday?"

Monday made a gesture which indicated west by north. And following the direction of his arm, Jack put the boat about.

"Wire in, Jack, and get your name up. That's your sort," said Harvey.

"You shut up, and mind that flying jib of yours," replied Jack, laughing.

"You look fine, standing there, and coaching the canoe. Hunston's also standing up, but he isn't a patch upon you," continued Harvey.

"Stow it, Dick," answered Jack. "I don't want any buttering, and it isn't a time for humbug."

In fact it was not a time for chaffing.

But the boys kept their spirits up wonderfully well, and were delighted at getting away from the enemy.

They were showing them what sailors call a "clean pair of heels."

Mr. Mole was with them too.

They had every reason to believe him loyal and true.

If so, he was an addition to their strength.

The boat ran splendidly before the freshening breeze.

The gale had lulled, but began to get up again, though Jack did not anticipate much more of it.

Wind in those latitudes often sinks as rapidly as it rises.

"There will be a fine sunset," remarked Monday.

"So I think," replied Jack, "and worse luck for us."

Everyone looked, as he spoke at the pursuing boats.

It was true that they were distancing them, and that every moment left them farther behind.

But in the event of a sudden calm, they could strike their sails and use their oars.

Jack had no oars.

He had not thought of being chased on the ocean, and for that reason did not make any.

Harvey attended to the sails with great skill, and obtained praise from Jack, who said—

"Bravo, Dick! A better fellow than you never loosened a topsail."

"We only want a flag to make us perfect," replied Harvey.

"Run up Mr. Mole's tile. It won't look bad, and I see its owner has gone to sleep."

"Right you are," said Harvey.

He took Mr. Mole's hat, and, without much exertion, secured it at the head of their small mast.

"We can't call it the British standard waving at the topmast," he observed. "But it will show them that we have got Mole on board, and they will know there is one more of us to fight."

"Hurrah for the blue sea!" said Jack, as they shot ahead, and the cries of their enemies grew fainter behind them.

At this exclamation, Mr. Mole was aroused, and looked languidly around him.

"Harvey," he said, "I will thank you for my hat. You imagined me asleep, but I was only revolving mighty ideas in my mind, and I saw you make free with my Panama straw."

Harvey pointed upwards.

"The wind's caught it, sir, and it's stuck up aloft," he replied.

"Now, that's a curious thing," remarked Mr. Mole.

"Stop your ship, Harkaway, and get down my hat."

"Strike our flag? Not if I know it. That's the banner of independence, and meant as a defiance to the Pisangs," responded Jack.

"Oh, if it's meant as a defiance to the Pisangs, all right," replied Mr. Mole, wrapping a handkerchief of the bandana species round his head.

"Mast' Jack," said Monday, "give um Monday a drink of rum."

"Certainly," answered Jack, taking out a bottle and handing it him. "You've had some hot work, and you deserve it."

The bottle was given to Monday, who took a pull, and seemed much relieved.

Mr. Mole eyed it wistfully, and said in a low voice—

"My faithful savage, hand me that bottle. I will replace it in a secure position."

Monday gave it him, and he pretended to stow it away, but, when no one was looking, he solaced himself with a secret draught, which did not tend to improve his usefulness to the party.

In fact, he soon fell into such a deep sleep, that he did not wake, although important events were passing around him.

As Jack had anticipated, the wind fell towards evening. Their pursuers were out of sight, but they could not be far off.

The boat made slow progress, and such advance as she did make grew less every five minutes.

In the tropics, when the sun sets, it is high time for everyone to hurry home.

There is no fading twilight.

Darkness presses closely on the footsteps of retreating day, and at once it is night.

In addition to the coming darkness a thick mist began to rise.

This might serve to conceal the runaways from the prying eyes of their pursuers.

In the absence of wind it was necessary to remain quiet till morning.

There was no current that would run the boat back to the rocks.

She might drift a little with the motion of the waves, but that was all.

Furling the sails, a watch was set.

Harvey and Monday lay down in the bottom of the boat and sought that sleep of which they were in need.

Jack sat on one of the thwarts and kept his ears open, for his eyes were not of much use in the thick mist and darkness.

Hours passed and nothing was heard but the rolling of the waves.

The boat was some miles from the shore and Jack could not distinguish the rolling of the surf upon the rocks.

A speck of light appeared in the east.

Day was about to break.

Jack, who was nearly worn out, touched Harvey on the shoulder.

The latter sprang up.

"What is it?" he exclaimed, "are the Pisangs upon us?"

"No. I can see no signs of them, but I want to have a pitch, and as I've been on duty for so many hours, I thought you might take a turn."

"Of course," replied Harvey, "why didn't you wake me before?"

"It's time enough. I wonder how long the calm is going to last?" said Jack; "we must look out, as I expect the beggars will be upon us as the mist rises."

He was about to lie down in the boat, when his practised ears detected the sound of oars in the distance.

"Hark!" he said, "do you hear that, Dick?"

"Oars," replied Harvey; "they are cruising about for us, knowing that we are stuck somewhere in this infernal mist."

"If it's only one boat, I don't mind," Jack continued, "or we might tackle two, but if the whole fleet are together, it's a case of Jack's up the orchard with us!"

"I should think they have been separated in the night, and that the one we hear is a solitary vessel which will be as much astonished at seeing us, as we are at meeting her," observed Harvey.

"I'd give something if the wind would blow, if it was only a capful, it would show what's behind, and we'd soon let them know what stuff our craft is made of."

The sound of the oars, which fell into, and were recovered regularly from the water, grew more distinct.

"Stand close, but don't fire till I give the order," exclaimed Jack.

Harvey nodded, and his companion woke Monday and Mr. Mole, whispering to them not to speak above their breath, as the enemy were not far off.

Monday grasped his rifle tighter, and looked to his pistols. Mr. Mole handled a revolver, which was his only weapon, with a carelessness that suggested danger to those around him, rather than to the enemy.

His contempt for the latter may perhaps be accounted for, from the fact that they were up to this time invisible.

"Don't let a shot be fired till I give the signal," Jack again said. "Let them run alongside of us nearly, so that we can make sure of our men."

"Four of us," remarked Monday under his breath, "um Pisang boat generally carry six to row, and one to steer."

"That's seven. It's odds against us, but we have powder and shot, and they have none, so we're equal."



J. H. "JACK GAVE THE WORD, AND THERE WAS THE REPORT OF FIREARMS." Vol. II. Page 192.

"Mr. Mole must get um head," said Monday, "and then him marry black princess at Limbi."

"Thank you, my worthy friend," replied Mr. Mole in a tone of disgust, "I don't care about dusky beauties."

"With us a great chief can have three wife. Mr. Mole great chief. He cut off Pisang head, and then he have three wife," continued Monday with a grin.

"The Lord deliver me from such a fate!" said Mr. Mole, inwardly shuddering at the prospect.

Monday was about to speak again, when Jack said, "Hush!"

The dim outline of the proa hove in sight.

All held their breath, and nerved themselves for the coming encounter.

The battle would be short, sharp, and decisive.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FIGHT UNDER THE SEA.

PRESENTLY a shout from the occupants of the boat showed Jack that he was perceived.

It was useless to remain on the defensive any longer.

"Let them have it. Pour in a volley," he exclaimed. "Aim low, and hurrah for old England!"

There was no white man in the boat, but Jack recognized as the one who was steering, Keyali, who had evinced such a longing for a white man's head.

Keyali was evidently in command.

He had no idea that he was so near those of whom he was in pursuit, and would have put back out of harm's way, had it not been too late.

The Pisangs ceased rowing, and seized their spears. With such force had the boat been propelled, that its momentum threatened to carry it alongside of the boys.

As soon as Jack had given the word there was a report of firearms.

At the same moment, the wind began to lift.

A faint breeze was springing up.

Four of the Pisangs fell under the well-directed shots.

The remaining three sprang from their boat into Jack's and a hand-to-hand fight ensued.

Keyali, with an eye like a hawk, singled out Jack, whom he caught round the neck and waist, with such a determined grip that he could not use his firearms.

Harvey was wounded in the thigh by a spear, and lay at the bottom of the boat helpless.

Monday tackled one Pisang, and Mr. Mole, in self-defence, grappled with another.

Jack and Keyali rocked to and fro in a deadly embrace. Suddenly they lost their balance, and fell into the sea.

Down, down, they sank, as if they were so much lead.

Jack feared they would both be drowned, as it was impossible to live long under water.

Mr. Mole saw them disappear and was so alarmed that he forgot to go on fighting, and the Pisang with whom he had been battling was about to stab him with a murderous-looking knife, when Harvey crawled up.

He seized the savage's leg, and made his teeth meet in the flesh.

This caused him such pain, that he dropped his knife, and fell on his knees, howling loudly.

Mr. Mole had begun to say his prayers, thinking it was all over with him.

He regained his courage, however, and fired a pistol close to his ear.

The Pisang fell forward with a groan.

Taking up the knife, Mr. Mole prodded him with it in various parts of the body.

"That will do, sir. He's dead as mutton," said Harvey.

"I like to make sure," replied Mr. Mole, inflicting more savage thrusts with the knife.

At the same time, Monday settled accounts with his antagonist; and, cutting off his head, held up the bleeding trophy in triumph.

"You all right, Mist' Mole? You much hurt, Mast' Harvey?" exclaimed Monday, adding, with a look of bewilderment, "Oh, de debbel! Where Mast' Jack? Him gone!"

"Gone!" said Harvey. "Isn't Harkaway here?"

"I saw him fall overboard not long ago," replied Mr. Mole, "locked in the arms of one Keyali, whom I know to be a very truculent ruffian."

Monday and Harvey looked blankly at one another. In the meantime, Jack had continued to descend into the bosom of the deep.

He managed to keep his senses about him.

Keyali would not let go, but suddenly Jack felt one arm relax, which allowed him to make use of his right hand.

He remembered that he had a sheath knife in his belt.

If he could draw this he might deal his adversary a blow which would save his life.

Apparently the same idea occurred to Keyali, for he began to feel for his knife.

Luckily for Jack it had fallen out in the struggle, being only slenderly secured with a string round his waist.

It did not take more than a second to assure Keyali of this fact.

He now struggled to regain his hold of Jack, and endeavoured to move one hand to his throat, so as to strangle him.

Being the stronger of the two, the Pisang might have succeeded in this effort, had he not given Jack an opportunity when he first loosened his grasp to feel for his knife.

This was a fortunate chance for Harkaway.

Had it not been for this he would probably have soon floated, a blackened and swollen corpse, before the eyes of his friends.

As soon as he had drawn the knife, he stabbed Keyali repeatedly about the legs.

The water was soon crimsoned with blood.

Keyali tightened his grip, and Jack, whose strength began to fail him, and whose head grew dizzy with the pressure of the water, made frantic efforts to reach a vital part of the Pisang's body.

This fight under the sea was terrible.

They had been beneath the waves nearly three-quarters of a minute.

Short as the time in reality was, it seemed a lifetime to Jack.

Maddened with pain, Keyali succeeded in grasping his opponent's throat.

The stifling sensation that had attacked Jack increased. A mist swam before his eyes.

Making one last effort, he plunged his knife up to the hilt in the Pisang's body.

Gradually his hold relaxed.

The arms fell down, and the man was dead.

Raising his feet, Jack struck the lifeless body, sending it down into the sea.

At the same time he began to ascend.

It was time.

A very short period more, and he would have gone to the bottom, locked in that death-grip.

Suddenly he appeared above the surface close to the boat.

Monday stretched out his arms, and dragged him on board, breathless, panting and exhausted.

It was some time before he could speak.

When he was able to use his voice, he gave an account of the fight beneath the waves.

"Thank goodness I am none the worse for it," he added. "But I hope never again to have such a tussle. Here, you Kafoozlum—what's your name, Monday—give me some brandy to wash the salt-water out of my mouth."

Monday did as he was requested, and Jack began to revive sensibly.

"I need not ask how you got on," he continued, "for I see you have disposed of your enemies. Are you hurt, Dick?"

Harvey was tying a bandage round his leg, and he replied—

"I've got an ugly thrust in the leg from a spear, but it's not much."

"Throw the carrion overboard," Jack said, pointing to the two dead Pisangs.

Monday proceeded to do so.

"I think you will all bear witness to my bravery," observed Mr. Mole. "I dispatched that wretched creature whom Monday is about to consign to the deep. I, Isaac Mole, dispatched him with my own hand."

"If I hadn't bit him in the leg with my teeth," said Harvey, "you would have gone to the mole country, sir."

"No jokes, Harvey; you may have distracted the poor fellow's attention, but I had him well in hand throughout, and was never for one moment afraid of him. Harkaway,

pass the bottle in a friendly spirit, and let us drink to our noble selves."

Jack granted his request, and Mr. Mole took a deep draught.

"Drink deep, the poet says," remarked Mr. Mole. "And truly he was right, for this spirit comforteth the inner man and keepeth out the rawness of the fog, which, I perceive, is disappearing.

In fact, as he spoke, the sail which had been lying idly by the mast began to flap to and fro.

"Hurrah," cried Jack, "the wind is coming."

"I'm sorry I can't lend a hand," said Harvey.

"You be still," replied Jack, who put some boating jackets under Harvey to make his position more comfortable.

"You want rest as much as I, for you were on the watch all night."

"Never mind me. I can't sleep when there is anything to do, but I make up for it afterwards. If the wind lasts, and Monday is right in his steering, we shall make Limbi in four or five hours."

Jack set the sails, and the little craft, as the wind caught her, ran before it in splendid style.

The sails bellied to the breeze, and Monday took the helm.

"Harkaway," said Mr. Mole, "take the rest, of which you stand so much in need and leave the management of the boat to this trusty savage and myself."

"Very well," said Jack, who thought he might safely do so, as there was nothing of consequence to attend to.

Accordingly he threw himself down, wet as he was, knowing that the hot sun would soon dry him, and fell fast asleep.

Mr. Mole applied his lips frequently to the bottle, much to Monday's delight.

"Mist' Mole got um best friend," he observed, as Mole hugged the bottle tightly.

"If that observation is intended to apply to this case-bottle," replied Mr. Mole, "all I can say is that you are a very rude and impertinent negro."

"No offence, sare; beg um pardon," said Monday, "Me 'fraid of you, sare, you, fight, so well."

This compliment mollified the object of it.

"You are right," he said; "by my bravery I have saved you all from a dreadful fate. I hewed mine adversary in pieces; but you must not repeat your remarks. In this climate the European requires stimulants to protect himself from the trying effects of the weather. What I take is taken with reluctance, and strictly as medicine."

"Monday not mind a drop of same sort of medsum."

"Not a drop. It is not good for you who are young and strong, and accustomed to the climate."

"Very well, Mist' Mole know best. Monday get him three wife."

"If you suggest such a thing again," cried Mr. Mole, in a rage, "I'll—I'll wring your neck like—like a sparrow's."

"No wring um poor Monday neck. Monday do what him like in Limbi. His name Matabella, and his father, Lanindyer. Great chief. King of Island. Allobey Monday. If Monday say Mole great chief, him cut off all Pisangs' heads, the woman all love him and he be 'bliged to have one, two, three wife."

"Is your father really the Tuan Biza of Limbi?" asked Mr. Mole.

Monday nodded his head vehemently.

"It's quite right," exclaimed Harvey, who could not sleep through pain, and had been an amused listener to this conversation.

"Is he not joking? I have found him of a facetious tendency."

"No, Monday's a howling swell in his own diggings, ain't you, Mon?" said Harvey.

"Matabella, him show Mist' Mole," answered the black, drawing himself up proudly as he stood in the stern, rudder-lines in hand.

"Take the bottle and help yourself, my young and intelligent friend," exclaimed Mr. Mole.

Monday did so with a grin.

"I hope nothing I have said has given you offence," continued Mr. Mole, "I had no idea you were a prince in your own country. But for Heaven's sake, say no more about the wives."

The conversation dropped, and the boat went on her course, the wind continuing to rise, as if impatient at having been still during the night.

No more boats belonging to the Pisang fleet were visible.

The sun rose high in the heavens, and the heavily-laden craft which carried the boys and their fortunes slowly ploughed her way along the deep.

Harvey and Mr. Mole covered themselves with a tarpaulin, and sought forgetfulness in slumber.

Monday was alone in command of the boat.

He could not steer and see to the sails as well, and when the force of the wind increased, and the sea rose, he thought it advisable to wake Jack.

Nearly five hours had passed since the dispersion of the Pisangs.

Jack had had time to recruit his wasted energies.

The boat made one or two dangerous lurches over, and Monday was afraid she might capsize. Jack started up with alacrity.

"What is it?" he asked.

Monday explained to him, and pointing to a dark ridge visible on the verge of the horizon, added—

"That Limbi."

"Oh, is that Limbi?" asked Jack. "You know your way about in these waters. How shall we land?"

"No land in the surf—not in this boat," answered Monday. "They send out boat when see us, and then we land in our fashion."

"Very well. I leave it all to you," replied Jack, well pleased at the prospect of reaching their journey's end without further danger.

The land was not more than five or six miles distant.

Their voyage would soon be over.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

RECEPTION AT LIMBI.

THE first sight of Limbi was not a reassuring one.

A straight open beach descended abruptly beneath the sea, so that the high swell never once broke before finding itself suddenly stopped in its rapid course.

The water rose up in one huge wall that rolled forward and fell on the steep shore with a roar like thunder.

Every few moments the water would rebound from the sand until it rose twice and a half as high as the natives standing near it, for several of the islanders had collected at the novel sight of a vessel standing in for their shore.

"My dear Harkaway," said Mr. Mole, who was roused from his sleep by the breaking of the surf, "you surely do not intend to run the risk of landing on such a coast?"

"Monday says he will make it all right," replied Jack.

"We near nuff now," exclaimed Monday, "please take in sail, Mast' Jack."

Jack did so, and the boat ceased her onward career, merely drifting a little with the tide.

Monday put his hands to his mouth, and gave utterance to a peculiarly shrill and piercing cry which he repeated three times.

"That to let them know me come, sare," he observed.

The noise awoke Harvey, who looking round him in astonishment, said—

"What's that beastly row?"

"It's only Monday," answered Jack.

"I thought it was um Pisangs, as he calls them. I never heard such a din in my life. It was like a baked 'tater boy on a cold night in winter, singing out, 'all 'ot, all 'ot!'"

"That our war cry," explained Monday; "all my people know my voice; they say 'That Matabella,' and my father come out to me in a proa and take us all on shore."

"Your father! Is he on the beach?"

"Yes. Monday see him. Look, look; he telling them it me, and they shake head. Now he order boat, because they all think me dead—killed, eat up by Pisang. See! father, how um run, Mast' Jack; how um skip, Mast' Harvey, how um talk, sare."

The black grew quite excited at the prospect of meeting with his father.

In fact, Jack saw that the few natives whom he had at first distinguished on the beach had grown into a crowd, which numbered upwards of two hundred.

An elderly man moved in their midst, and to him they paid the strictest attention, as if he were entitled to command.

His manner was that of a prince or chief, and it was

clear that Monday's peculiar cry had produced a singular effect upon the inhabitants of the island.

For a few minutes it was not evident what the Limbians were about.

They ran to and fro carrying pieces of wood, and all seemed confusion.

"What are the beggars trying to do?" asked Harvey.

"Blest if I know," replied Jack. "They are like bees in a hive, when they're going to swarm."

The natives did not keep them long in suspense.

They soon made a rude skid or wide ladder with large poles on the sides and small green ones with the bark torn off for the rounds.

This was laid down on the beach while the wave was forming, and a heavy boat, with a sort of awning in the middle to keep off the spray, was pushed on to it as the wave broke and a broad sheet of surge partially buoyed her up.

As this wave receded she was successfully launched.

The boat, guided by native hands, reached Jack's boat, and an affectionate greeting passed between Monday and his friends.

His father, the Tuan Biza of Limbi, was a man of commanding stature, but his self-possession was great.

He had given up his son as lost.

When a prisoner falls into the hands of his enemies, he rarely, if ever, escapes.

To see Matabella again, was to Lanindyer a resurrection of his son.

Monday threw himself on his neck and kissed him affectionately, but the old man displayed no emotion.

It was evident, though, that he was affected, for tears trembled in his eyes.

When Monday recovered himself, he pointed to Jack, Harvey, and Mr. Mole and told them in the native language who they were, and what they had done for him.

In teaching Monday English, Jack and Harvey had, of necessity, learnt his language.

So that the conversation between the father and son was intelligible to them.

Mr. Mole also knew the native dialect, which was common to all the tribes about these islands, for he had picked it up during his captivity.

Turning to Jack, the aged chief said—

“Saviour of my child, you are welcome to Limbi, and you shall live like a prince among our people.”

“Thank you,” replied Jack. “It is my pride to be the friend of so great a chief as Lanindyer, who is alike renowned in war and peace.”

The Tuan Biza now set his men to work, and all the stores were moved out of Jack's boat into the proa, and in the latter they all embarked, leaving their own craft to ride at anchor in charge of a native.

Harvey was lifted carefully from one boat to the other, being unable to walk as his wound was painful in the extreme, and his leg much swollen.

When all was ready, they ran into the shore over the heavy rollers.

Other natives appeared on the shore with a huge coil of rattan an inch or more in diameter.

Two or three of them seized an end, ran down and plunged into a huge wave as coolly and unhesitatingly as a diver would leap from the side of a boat into a quiet bay.

The end of the cord was fastened to the front part of the boat.

The other was carried up a long way on the beach, and the natives ranged themselves in two rows, each grasping it with one hand ready to haul in when the signal was given. A number of heavy seas now rolled in and broke, but the natives on board kept the boat from being swept forward or backward.

A smaller swell now came on.

Every native gave a wild yell, and those on shore hauled in the rattan with all their might.

Away darted the boat on the crest of a wave with the swiftness of an arrow.

Soon the boat was in the midst of the surf.

The next instant it was on the skid, and away it glided with the speed of a locomotive.

Before Jack could realize the fact, they were high and dry upon the bank before the next wave came in.

In this way was their landing in Limbi effected.

Monday had not exaggerated his influence with the natives of Limbi.

There were about a thousand in number, living in a town called Tompano, which was built on a hill.

This made it healthy, and afforded some security from attack.

Monday's father had ruled over the inhabitants for some years, as his father had done before him.

He was, in fact, descended from a long line of princes.

The people who lived in the neighbouring island of Pisang were the hereditary enemies of the Limbians.

War was almost always going on between them, and with varying success.

The town in which the Pisangs lived was called Palembang.

A few years ago the Limbians had invaded Pisang, and being victorious, burnt Palembang to the ground.

This made the Pisangs very angry and vindictive.

They had vowed vengeance ever since, and threatened an invasion of Limbi.

Jack's supply of powder, shot, and guns was exhibited to the Limbians, and their use explained to them.

They hailed Jack and his friends at once as great chiefs.

A house was given them to live in near the king's palace.

They were delighted at the restoration of Matabella, or Monday, who was much beloved.

These simple people, savage though they were in their habits, were not wanting in gratitude.

Jack got all their fighting men together, and instructed them in the use of firearms.

But he was very sparing with the powder and shot, because when his supply was gone, he could get no more.

He knew of what advantage it would be to him and his friends in the event of an invasion of Limbi.

That Hunston would carry on the war he did not doubt.

If, indeed, the Pisangs should be afraid to invade Limbi, he determined to land an army on their island.

For some time everything went on quietly.

The Pisangs did not show themselves.

Monday would not leave Jack.

He might have lived in his father's palace, but his attachment to the boys was so great that he lived in their house and was Jack's body-guard.

He never allowed him to stir out unless he accompanied him.

"You save my life, and you teach me do what right,"

he said. "I spend my life with you. It is your life, and Monday still your servant."

"My friend, you mean, Monday," replied Jack.

"You do as you like with me, Mast' Jack," continued the grateful fellow. "You ask me die for you, I do it, because I then give back the life you save."

Both Jack and Harvey were much attached to Monday, and liked to have him near them.

Harvey's leg got well in about six weeks, and he could walk again.

They had plenty of servants, and did not allow Monday to do any menial work, though he was always ready to lend a hand when necessary.

As the Pisangs did not show themselves, Jack planned an invasion of their country on a large scale.

A fleet was provided, and the army, which numbered four hundred men, was drilled every day.

The inhabitants of Pisang and Limbi were about equal in number.

Making an allowance for the women and children, the aged and the infirm, they could put four hundred, or a few more, in the field.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MONDAY'S NEWS.

THE white men were an object of attraction to the ladies of Limbi.

Every chief was entitled to have three wives.

It was reported that the strangers had killed their enemies, and, therefore, were, by the laws of the land, able to marry.

Jack and Harvey were too young to indulge in any idea of the sort.

If they had not been, they would not have fallen in love with the Limbian women, who were far from being attractive.

Besides which, Jack was in love with Emily, and his principal reason for wishing the Limbians to attack the Pisangs, was to find if she really was on their island, and if so, rescue her.

Jack found his new friends very idle.

They would fight, hunt, and fish, but nothing more.

The women were made to do the principal part of the work on the island.

All were very fond of dancing.

The principal dance was called the minari.

It consisted of men and women arranging themselves in two rows.

They slowly twisted their bodies to the right and left, at the same time moving the extended arms and open hands in circles in opposite directions.

The only motions of the naked feet were to change the weight of the body from the heel to the toe, and reverse it.

Monday had two cousins, Alfura and Ambonia.

They expressed a wish to marry the white men, as a mode of showing their gratitude for their having saved Monday's life.

The king summoned a council to discuss the idea.

Monday heard of it.

Alfura and Ambonia were his near relations, and he hastened to tell his masters the news.

Jack and Harvey were together, talking about Emily.

Mr. Mole had gone out for a walk, to think alone about his tea-garden in China.

"Mast' Jack," exclaimed Monday, coming into the house, "what you think?"

"I don't know," replied Jack. "Have the Pisangs come after us?"

"No; not them, but the Tuan Biza and all the chiefs met in council to-day."

"What about?"

"Alfura and Ambonia—you know them. They are my father's brother's daughters."

"That's a rounabout way of describing them; but no matter. Go ahead," remarked Harvey.

"They have said they want to marry a white man, and the chiefs are to decide whether they shall or not."

"Scissors!" exclaimed Jack. "Suppose the white man don't see it!"

"Then he must leave the island," replied Monday. "If one of the Tuan Biza's family want to marry and choose a man, and he not have her, then he go."

"Oh, that's it, is it? I wish I'd got a return ticket," Jack remarked.

"If the chiefs say yes, they send for you, and it is our custom to place sometimes seven, eight, nine women together."

"Yes."

"Then you go and pick out one, two, three, if you like; but of course you take those who have asked for you."

"I see; you pick out the ones who have honoured you by their preference," replied Jack.

"That is a dodge to spare their blushes if they have any," observed Harvey.

"Yes," said Monday, quickly. "You not supposed to know they ask for you."

"But I don't want to marry," exclaimed Jack.

"Nor I," said Harvey.

"You should have kept us out of this, Monday. It's not kind of you," Jack continued.

Monday grinned.

"What do you stand grinning there for like the ugly baboon you are?" said Jack in a rage.

"'Scuse me, Mast' Jack. I not grin at you," replied Monday.

"Then you're indulging at my expense," said Harvey.

"Where's my crutch? I'll lamn into you, Master Monday, if you were twenty king's sons."

"No lamn in, sare," Monday cried in alarm. "You say you too young to marry. You wait a year and let Mr. Mole marry Alfura and Ambonia; that my idea—that why I grin, sare."

Jack smiled, and Harvey put down the crutch with which he had walked while his leg was bad.

"That's a rattling good idea, too," said Jack. "It will be a rare spree to see Mole with—how many did you say, Monday?"

"Two at first."

"Oh, yes, two to start with, Alfura and Ambonia. Two beauties they are, too—aren't they, Dick?"

"Stunners," replied Harvey. "Alfura's got a nose like a squashed pumpkin, and her ears stick out like a cow's, while her mouth would enable her to eat mince pies whole."

"And Ambonia's fat and pudgy, with a temper like a wild hyena. I saw her chivey a cove down the street the other day," said Jack.

"What for?"

"Because he bagged something out of her father's garden. She did give it him and no mistake."

"Monday's a genius," said Harvey.

"If they send for me to the council," continued Jack, "I shall treat them to a little ventriloquism, and say that the great spirit does not wish us to marry for a year, as we are too young."

"And that Mole is to have Alfura and Ambonia, or be cast adrift in a boat without oars, sails, rudder or grub," put in Harvey.

"Exactly."

"That's the ticket," Harvey went on. "You'll fog them beautifully with your ventriloquism."

"Monday," exclaimed Jack.

"Yes, Mast' Jack," replied the black with his usual respectful manner.

"Don't you let on to anyone about my gift."

"About you talkee in the air?"

"That's it."

"Monday never say nothing."

"Then you say something. 'Never say nothing' isn't grammar, Monday. You ought to go to Crawcour's if ever you reach England with us," observed Harvey.

Monday shook his head.

This speech was beyond him.

But he protested that he never mentioned anything that the boys told him to keep secret.

He had heard Jack ventriloquise once or twice, and the mystery had been explained to him.

Jack and Harvey felt perfectly happy when they saw a way out of the new difficulty which now presented itself.

It was nothing unusual in the archipelago for girls of thirteen to marry boys of sixteen.

The natives arrive at maturity so much earlier in warm climates than we do in our colder latitudes.

To plead that they were too young would have been a poor excuse.

"Mole shall be the victim," said Jack.

"How many wives shall he have?" asked Harvey.

"Monday says he can't have more than three by the law of the land. I'd give him a dozen if I could work it."

"Let him have Alfura and Ambonia to begin with."

Mole hates women, I think. He was never very kind to them, and if he doesn't care about marrying English beauties, he'll faint at the idea of two full-blown niggers," observed Harvey.

"As brave a fo'castle man as ever broke biscuit would steer clear of them."

"And naturally a loblolly-boy like Mole will fight shy."

"He's in a narrow channel, and he'd better take soundings," said Jack; "for, if I'm not mistaken, here's a messenger coming up the street to tell me to come to the council."

"That right, sare," replied Monday. "Him de message, sure enuff."

"Then it's all 'u-p' with Mole; for, to get myself out, I must get him into the mess."

It was as Monday had predicted.

Alfura and Ambonia, ladies of high rank, had, in accordance with the custom of the country, expressed themselves willing to bestow their hands and hearts upon the adventurous stranger.

This proposal, owing to their high position, had to be considered by the chiefs in council.

They had come to the determination that the ladies' wish should be granted.

In the event of non-compliance with the desire of the fair ones, expulsion from the island would be the result.

The council consisted of twenty-five members, who sat on mats in a sort of barn.

Room was made for Jack.

The Tuan Biza himself informed Jack that he might have his choice of his relatives, or take them both for his wives if he liked.

Jack coughed, and replied that he was, indeed, a fortunate man to be so highly honoured.

He shouldn't mind one of the ladies.

With one, however, he would be content, and his friend, Harvey, might have the other.

A murmur of applause arose.

Then Jack, throwing his voice into the centre of the apartment, near the ceiling, changed the tone, which became serious, if not awful.

"Forbear," he said. "I, the spirit of the white men, speak."

A general consternation seized the chiefs in council.

They looked at one another terror-stricken, for, as we have said, they were all very superstitious, and believed in witchcraft.

"Jack and Harvey are your guests," he continued. "They are about to lead you against your enemies, the Pisangs, over whom you shall be victorious. "Their customs are not your customs, and they must not marry until one year has passed, for they are too young to have wives."

A murmur of approbation, mingled with astonishment, ran through the council.

"But," continued Jack, "I, the spirit of the white men, do not wish the ladies Alfura and Ambonia to remain single."

As Jack spoke in the native dialect, his words were perfectly intelligible.

"Who, then, O spirit!" asked the king, "is worthy to have their matchless charms?"

"Who but the Tuan Biza of the white men—who but the great chief Mole, who has qualified himself for marriage by cutting off a head?"

"Good, good," broke from the assembly. "The spirit of the white men speaks the words of wisdom. It is very good."

"Let the Tuan Biza Mole be united to both ladies at once," Jack went on.

"It shall be done, O spirit!" said the council, as with one voice, and bowing their heads.

Jack pretended to be disappointed at this interruption, and said that he had taken a fancy to Alfura.

"We have other beauties," replied the king, "and you shall marry when the year has run, O friend of my soul!"

"I was afraid the spirit would interfere," continued Jack.

"Does he often do so?"

"Always, when we do anything against the laws of our priests."

"And is it unlawful to marry before a certain age?" asked the king.

"Of course it is; that's at the bottom of the mischief," answered Jack.

"Rest easy, O son of my adoption!" replied the king. "You shall do no wrong through us."

Rising, the chief said a few words to his friends, and they dispatched a messenger to fetch Mr. Mole.

"Shall I go, O Tuan Biza, and acquaint my countryman with his good fortune?" asked Jack.

The proposal was accepted, and Jack went in search of Mole.

He left the chiefs in council, holding Jack in higher veneration than ever.

They had not the slightest idea that they had been imposed upon.

To their simple minds the great spirit of the whites had spoken.

His dictates must be obeyed.

Though Jack and Harvey were for a time lost as husbands to their princesses, they had Mole to fall back upon.

For him there was no escape.

Little did he suspect what news was in store for him, as he wended his way back to the town of Tompano.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MR. MOLE'S DESPAIR.

WHEN Jack returned to Harvey, who was waiting for him with impatience, he began to laugh heartily.

"I've done it, Dick," he said, when his merriment was over. "We're under the protection of the spirit. Has Mole turned up?"

"Not yet. It's feeding-time, though, and Mole is generally pretty punctual at knife-and-fork time. How did you do it?"

"I told the council that you and I were highly honoured, and would marry the ladies. There was applause at this. Then I changed my voice, and you should have seen the beggars stare."

"Of course the spirit forbade the banns, and suggested Mole as the bridegroom. Which is he to have?"

"Both of them."

"Both?" repeated Harvey. "My eye, Jack! it will give him fits. He's always going on about women, and saying he shall die as he has lived—a bachelor."

"Will he? We shall see him with a couple of young papooses on his knee. I wonder what colour they'll be."

"Chocolate and cream—half and half."

"Piebald, perhaps. What a lark!" said Jack.

"It's all a spree," remarked Harvey.

At this juncture Mr. Mole entered, looking hot and tired.

He had been botanising, and carried in his hand some rare specimens of the flora of the island.

"Something more for my collection," he remarked.

"I shall have quite a cabinet of curiosities soon."

"I think you will, sir," replied Jack.

"What do you mean? Your observations have a doubtful tendency in them sometimes, Harkaway."

"No doubt about this last start, sir."

"What on earth are you talking of?"

"The council is waiting for you," replied Jack, "and you are destined to a high honour."

"Ah! I suppose they want to make me prime minister or chancellor of the exchequer; very good! I will give these savages a constitution, and bring in an education-bill. We must have a school here."

"It isn't that, sir, though that may come afterwards."

"What is it, then?"

"You're to be married, sir."

Mr. Mole gave a high bound.

Harvey sang—

"For I'm mar-ry-ed to a mer-may-ed,
At the bottom of the deep, blue sea."

"You are joking, Harkaway. Do not indulge in merriment at my expense. Explain this to me. No foolishness?" exclaimed Mr. Mole.

"It's quite true, sir. Two ladies have chosen you, and by the law of the land you must marry them, or——"

"Or what?"

"Leave the island in an empty boat—no provisions, no oars, no anything."

"Why, that's certain death!" replied Mole, with a groan, adding—

"Who are the—ahem? the females?"

"Miss Alfura and Ambonia, relatives of the royal family."

"What, those she-dragons? I know them," exclaimed Mr. Mole. "Alfura's forty if she's a day, and has lost all her front teeth. Ambonia's got a temper of the old gentleman himself, and squints awfully."

"Consider the honour, sir."

"Honour be—but no, I will not give way. I will command myself. I shall proceed to the council chamber, and remonstrate with those savages."

Jack laughed.

"What is fun to you is death to me, and if I find that you have got this up for me, I'll—I'll——"

Mr. Mole could not find words dreadful enough for what he would do.

"Go on, sir," said Jack. "Who's afraid."

"I didn't mean anything," Mole replied. "Come, Harkaway, stand my friend in this matter, and get me out of the mess."

"Can't be done."

"Why not?"

"If you don't at once marry those ladies, you'll be put in the boat."

"I don't know which is the worst prospect," Mr. Mole said. "Confound the natives! Confound everything."

He began to tear his hair, and danced about like a madman.

When he stopped with a handful of hair in each hand, Jack said—

"That's lively, sir. Can't you favour us again?"

"He's as good as a dancing dervish," cried Harvey.

"Jack, dear Jack," said Mr. Mole, "you always were my friend, and a generous fellow; tell me you're only chaffing."

"I'm not indeed."

"Then I'm a lost mar Two wives! Oh, Lord! oh, Lord!"

"In a month's time you'll be entitled to take a third."

"A third!" cried the wretched Mole. "Tell me, Harkaway—tell me, if you love me, if there are any better asylums in this beastly country?"

"Not that I know of."

"If not, I shall wander about the island a raving maniac. Oh, Isaac Mole, why were you ever born? Wretched man, what have you done to deserve such a fate?"

Monday, who had been down to the council-room again, now came back.

"The council has broke up," he said. "They all gone to bring Alfura and Ambonia here."

"Here! Are the furies coming here?" asked Mr. Mole.

"They not long first."

"But they can't take me until the ceremony is performed."

"We no ceremony. They say they have you, and the council decide. Then it all over. No ceremony, sare. They come take you home."

"Now? Do you mean this instant?"

"In one, two short minutes," replied Monday.

Mr. Mole began to dance again.

"This how it done, Mist' Mole," continued Monday. "They bring p'raps ten women. All stand in a row. You look at them. One by one they come to you and you shake your head to all but Alfura and Ambonia, to whom you kneel. That all the ceremony."

"Never! I'll die first," replied Mr. Mole.

"They put you in boat else," said Monday, grinning.

"Dick, give him some whisky," said Jack.

Harvey poured some brandy into half a cocoanut shell, and Mole quaffed it eagerly.

"You're a gone coon, sir. Better make the best of it," he observed.

Mr. Mole shook his fist in Monday's face, saying—

"You confounded black lump of ugliness, you have done this for me! But I'll have your life!"

Harvey forced him into a seat.

"Let me get at him! I'll do him an injury! I'll have his——"

"Life," he was about to say, when Harvey gravely put in "head," which made Jack burst out laughing.

"Harvey," said Mr. Mole, in a faint tone, "you are low and vulgar. You are raised but little above those poor, benighted savages in the social scale."

"I wouldn't bullyrag them if I were you," replied

Harvey. "Remember you are going to marry a couple of the poor benighteds."

"Come, sir, don't give way. I'm sure Alfura's got beautiful shiny skin," said Jack.

"And Ambonia's hair is curly and oily," exclaimed Harvey.

"Better not say much," remarked Monday. "They beat you, sare; they scratch, they kick."

"Well, it's only for life, that's one comfort; and I shan't live long under the infliction," answered Mr Mole, with a moan.

As he spoke, a loud noise was heard in the street.

The procession was approaching.

First came the band, which consisted of a score of men carrying gongs.

The gongs increased regularly in size from one of five or six inches to one of a foot or fifteen inches in diameter.

Each had a round knob or boss in the middle, which was struck with a small stick.

When made to reverberate in this manner, their music was very agreeable.

It resembled closely that made by small bells.

This instrument was called the bonang.

After the bonangs came the chiefs of the town.

Behind these were the nine virgins, Ambonia and Alfura being in the centre.

The rear was brought up by a guard of soldiers, and behind these again came the rabble of the town of Tompano, who, like crowds all over the world, had collected to witness what they could of the unusual ceremony.

CHAPTER XL.

TAKING HIM HOME.

WHEN Harvey heard the bonangs, he exclaimed—

"Chingarings and chopsticks! hongs and gongs! That's your sort! Go it, ye cripples! Have some more whisky, sir!"

Mr. Mole began to recover his composure a little.

"I think I will even follow your advice," he answered.

' I only to nerve myself for the dreadful ordeal. I want a little something."

"Nothing like a drop of whisky for a nerver," replied Jack.

"That's right, Mist' Mole. Show um pluck, sare," chimed in Monday.

"Very well, my black friend," replied Mr. Mole, "I owe you one—yes, sir, I owe you one—and we'll square accounts some day."

"Keep up your pecker. Let them see what stuff you're made of. Don't funk, sir."

"I hope an Englishman never shows the white feather, Harkaway. Nor will I. No, not even under the most trying circumstances."

"Good again," cried Harvey, who was in an ecstasy of delight at the anticipated fun.

"I will bear myself bravely, like one advancing to the sacrifice. I have before my eyes the gladiators of ancient Rome."

"Who were they, sir?"

"Have you so soon forgotten the lessons of your early youth, Harkaway? I cry shame upon you."

"Set of coves who fought in the arena," observed Harvey.

"You are right," continued Mr. Mole. "But I object to the word 'coves.' However, let it pass. They had their '*Ave Cæsar*,' or '*Hail Cæsar!*' and they added '*Morituri te salutamus*,' which, being translated, means 'Being about to die, we salute you.' My fate is worse than death; but I will be brave."

"I have remarked, sir," said Harvey, "that these Limbi ladies have a peculiar scent or odour of their own."

"Smell—odour, Don't be delicate, Harvey. Call it a smell, which is highly suggestive of polecats."

"All right, sir; anything to please you."

"However agreeable it may be to native noses, my English nasal organ revolts at it. They are rank, Harvey, very rank; and all the perfumes in Rimmel's shop would not convince me to the contrary."

"You'll like it, sir, when you're used to it," exclaimed Jack.

Mr. Mole darted a ferocious look at him.

The noise of the bonangs increased, and the hoarse shouts of the multitude grew nearer.

Again the wretched man applied himself to the whisky bottle.

"Go it, sir ; nip away," exclaimed Harvey, singing—

" Whisky killed my poor dad ;
Whisky drove my mother mad.
Whisky, whisky,
Whisky for my Johnny ! "

Fortified with a sort of Dutch courage, Mr. Mole awaited the coming of the procession with the resignation of a lamb going to the slaughter.

"How do you find yourself now, sir?" asked Jack.

"Agonized, my young friend."

"Pity the sorrows of poor old Mole," said Harvey.

Mr. Mole was about to reply when the band halted outside, and ceasing playing, allowed the members of the deputation to enter.

First came the chiefs of the council chamber, and these were closely followed by the nine virgins.

The soldiers kept guard at the door.

Ranging themselves in a row, the young ladies cast down their eyes and prepared themselves for the ceremony.

The king, addressing Monday, exclaimed—

"Matabella, does the Tuan Biza of the white men know what is required of him by our customs?"

"He does, O king, live for ever," answered Monday.

"Is he aware of the high honour the alliance will confer upon him?"

"He is ; and feels deeply gratified, O king ; may thy victories increase," replied Monday.

"Let the rites commence."

"At once, O king. May you always be victorious in war," said Monday.

He then filled a calabash with whisky, of which spirit the Limbians had learnt to be very fond, and handed it round to the company.

All partook of it but the women.

"Now, then, sir," said Jack to Mr. Mole, "go in and win. All eyes are upon you."

"Faint heart never won fair lady," exclaimed Harvey.

"Keep up the honour of old England."

The nine virgins stood apart, and Mr. Mole staggered rather than walked towards them.

Doep groans broke from him.

The perspiration stood in beads upon his forehead.

At a signal from Monday, the band again struck up a quick, jig-like sort of tune.

The nine virgins looked up.

First one left the rank, and walking past Mr. Mole, he shook his head at her, and she took up a position at the other end of the row.

The second did the same with a like result.

The third was Alfura.

As soon as Mr. Mole saw Alfura, he sank gracefully on one knee before her.

This was the signal of acceptance.

She took a place on his left side.

A loud shout of applause from the assembled spectators rent the air, which was taken up by the mob outside.

Number four now passed Mr. Mole, and was rejected.

The fifth shared a similar fate.

So did six, seven, and eight.

Ambonia was the ninth and before her Mr. Mole bowed as before.

Again the shouts arose as she placed herself on his right side.

Each wife seized an arm, and held him in a tight grip, as if afraid that he was going to run away from them.

The calabash was refilled, and the health of the bridegroom drunk heartily.

"Long live the Tuan Biza of the whites!" exclaimed the king, "and may his children people the land."

The chiefs now filed out of the room, and the seven virgins, surrounding Mr. Mole and his wives, followed them.

He was dragged from the apartment, and the procession, led by the band, proceeded down the principal street of Tompano, at the end of which was the house of Alfura and Ambonia.

Mole cast an appealing glance at Jack who was looking out of a window.

"Never say die, sir," cried Jack.

"They'll comb your hair for you, sir," exclaimed Harvey.

A curse not loud but deep burst from the unhappy man, who was soon lost to sight by a bend in the street.

The ceremony was over.

Mr. Mole was a married man, very much married indeed, and his wives were taking him home to the nuptial board.

It was not until two days had passed that the boys beheld their old friend and instructor.

On the morning of the third day, Mr. Mole paid them a visit.

He looked wistfully around him as he entered, and seemed afraid of being followed.

"Hullo, sir!" exclaimed Jack. "How goes it with you?"

"Badly, my dear boy, very badly," replied Mr. Mole.

"How's that? We call you the Great Pasha, the Grand Turk."

"Brigham Young is nearer the mark," said Harvey. "Mole's a Mormonite."

"Bring 'em young, you should say," returned Mr. Mole. "Tempers grow with age, and Ambonia's a perfect fiend. It's too late in life now to correct either of them."

"What's happened, sir? We thought you'd have looked us up before now?"

"So I should have done, but I've been locked in, bolted in, barred, and had the liberty of the subject painfully infringed."

"Bottled up, eh, sir? That's nothing extraordinary in married life, is it?" replied Jack.

"I don't know. It's all new to me."

"You ought to be an authority in these matters. Perhaps it's a custom of the country."

"When you're in Turkey, you must do as the Turkeys do," remarked Harvey.

"Oh, the life I've led!" continued Mr. Mole, with a sigh. "Alfura's not so bad but Ambonia is an incarnate fiend. She has boxed my ears, and has threatened me with a bamboo cane."

"So you have come out on the loose, sir?"

"I escaped through the window, and, thinking you would comfort me with some spirituous liquor, I have sought you."

"It's very wrong to encourage a married man in stay-

ing away from his home ; but for the sake of old times, you shall have what you like," said Jack, gravely.

"Spoken like yourself, Harkaway. Whisky, if you please, and plenty of it."

Monday supplied his wants, coming in as Harvey clapped his hands, as a signal for him to appear.

He could not help laughing at Mr. Mole, but a sign from Jack caused him to withdraw.

"It's very hard to be jeered and giped at by a miserable savage like that," observed Mole, "and I think you ought not to encourage him, Harkaway."

"What did he do, sir?" asked Jack.

"Never mind, he is gone; and the memory of his offence shall go with him."

"Have you put your marriage in the paper, sir?" asked Harvey, innocently.

"How could I do so when there are no journals in the island, and the natives are unable to read?"

"Oh, I forgot that."

"I think, sir," Jack remarked, "you might have been content with one wife at a time. It is bad form to have two."

"You know as well as I, Harkaway, that I had no voice in the matter."

"You must have liked the girls in your heart, sir."

"Harkaway," said Mr. Mole, very gravely, "did you ever see a snake?"

"I'm sorry to say I have seen a good many since I have been in this part of the world," replied Jack.

"Did you ever take a fancy to one?"

"I've admired them at a distance, but I can't say I ever thought of cuddling one up in my arms."

"Then don't ask me if I like the Limbi women. Let us talk of something else. I am degraded in my own eyes. Harvey, you keep that bottle too much on your own side. I am afraid you have taken to drinking lately."

"I, sir!" cried Harvey. "No, sir. A sailor always likes his allowance. I don't go beyond it."

Mr. Mole helped himself, and his temper improved.

CHAPTER XLI.

STARTLING NEWS.

"HAVE you heard the news, sir?" asked Jack, after a pause.

"News," repeated Mr. Mole. "I was not aware that in this wretched country they had anything of the sort."

"You ought to take an interest in anything that is moving, because you have a stake in the country."

"If it will gratify you, Harkaway, I will say that I have a feeling of intense interest in anything that may befall this unhappy land," continued Mr. Mole, adding, "Harvey, oblige me by letting the bottle alone. I am quite capable of taking care of it."

"Right, sir," replied Harvey.

"There's going to be a war," continued Jack.

"Going to be. There always is a war, isn't there? The beasts are always fighting."

"He's thinking of his wives," said Harvey.

"Harvey," exclaimed Mr. Mole, in a tone of rebuke, "it is unkind of you to remind me of my misery—let the bottle alone, if you please."

Repeated applications to the bottle of whisky made Mr. Mole's eyes swim in his head.

"A war," he said to himself. "What do I care for a dozen wars?"

"We are to start to invade Pisang this day week, sir, and you shall have an independent command," said Jack.

"An independent humbug," answered Mr. Mole.

"What, sir?"

"Humbug, I said," repeated Mr. Mole, who, in spite of his growing inebriety, grew alarmed at the prospect of war. "I said humbug, and I'll stick to it. What have I got to do with war?"

"We are going to fight Hunston."

"Fight him and welcome. Kill him if you like. It is fitting and proper for you to do so. You and Harvey are young. I am—ahem!—I am a married man, settled down, you know, Harkaway, and it would not be right to take me away from my wife."

"Wives, sir."

"I stand corrected," continued Mr. Mole with a bland smile. "Go, by all means, Harkaway, and fight those despicable Pisangs. I will stop at home and organise the militia, or whatever the reserve forces may be."

"Won't you come with us?"

"No. My place is here in Tompano. I am a family man, Harkaway. No fighting for me, unless it is for hearths and home; then Isaac Mole will be to the fore, and woe to the foe."

"That's a rhyme, sir. You should wish——" said Harvey.

"I do wish. I wish most devotedly that—that there will be an earthquake which will swallow up Ambonia," replied Mole.

"Then you don't mind Alfura?"

"She's ugly, but she's not vicious," said Mr. Mole.

"I can put up with Alfura; that is to say, for a time."

"Until you can get to your tea-garden in China, sir?" hazarded Jack.

"Precisely, my dear boy."

"You can sing, sir, 'Happy could I be with either, were t'other dear charmer away,'" said Harvey.

"With your usual impulsiveness, you have jumped to a wrong conclusion, Harvey," answered Mr. Mole. "I could not be happy with either, and my only time of peace is when they are fighting amongst themselves."

"Fighting!"

"Yes, like bull-dogs. When they are not throwing stones and vegetable refuse at *me*, they are engaged in the mild amusement of tearing each other's cheeks, which is a pleasing pastime for a husband to stand and look on at."

"Sorry for you, sir. Knock 'em down and jump on 'em," said Harvey.

"You are a brute," replied Mr. Mole. "A little while ago you exhorted me to keep up the honour of my country, and behave like an Englishman."

"Dick, shut up," said Jack.

"No," Mr. Mole went on, "I will not reduce myself to the level of a Whitechapel costermonger. I will not even floor them. What though Alfura punches me on the nose, and Ambonia hurls a dead cat in my eye."

"That's nothing, sir," exclaimed Jack.

"Nothing? Isn't it? Did you ever have a dead cat settle on your left eye?" cried Mr. Mole sharply.

"No, sir, and don't want to. But let me tell you the news. It's rather startling."

"What is it, Harkaway?" said Mr. Mole, handling the bottle with an unsteady hand.

"Excuse me a minute, and then I'll tell you," replied Jack, as Harvey came over and whispered to him.

"Make Mole tight, and carry him home to his wives."

Jack nodded, and went on—

"Help yourself, sir, don't be afraid of it. There's more where that came from."

"I wish you'd come to your news," said Mr. Mole snappishly.

"We are going to invade Pisang at once. Harvey and I take the lead. Our fleet is ready; our soldiers number four hundred, and it's either to be victory or Westminster Abbey."

"You told me that before, and I persist in my resolve to patrol the town. I will be governor of Tompano," answered Mr. Mole.

"I thought you imagined I was joking, sir, and did not believe what I said," Jack rejoined.

Mr. Mole got up, and staggered towards the door.

"Is your floor straight?" he asked.

"Lie down and try it, sir."

Mr. Mole sat down with an imbecile chuckle, and said—

"Tell Ambonia I'm very jolly. Say we're jol' good flows, ev'ry one. I don't care Ambonia. I'll let 'bonia know if she givesh me any of her nonshensh."

"Here's your health, sir, and death to Hunston and the Pisangs. You'll drink that toast, won't you?" said Harvey.

He tendered him a glass, which Mole tossed off.

It was the finishing stroke, for he rolled backwards, laughing heartily, as if it was a good joke.

"He's a settled member," exclaimed Harvey.

"Collar his legs, Dick; I'll take his nut, and we'll cart him off home."

"I pity him when Ambonia gets her fingers nicely twisted in his hair," replied Harvey.

They took him up, and were not long in conveying him into the presence of his wives.

The ladies had wondered what had become of their husband, and had been indulging in a little quarrel on their own account.

Various articles of domestic use lay about the room in some confusion.

There were all the signs of a free fight.

When Mr. Mole was deposited on the floor, the wives guessed what had brought him into that state.

Each abused him in the choicest and most flowery terms which their language allowed them to employ.

The boys turned round and went away leaving them at it lest they might fall in for their share.

"Ambonia's a caution," said Harvey. "Didn't she slip in a good un?"

Jack made no answer.

"You might have the civility to answer me when I speak to you," continued Harvey.

"Excuse me, Dick. I was thinking of something else. Shall we find the king in, do you think, if we call at the palace?" replied Jack.

"Sure to, I should fancy."

"Step up with me, will you? We must arrange all the details of our invasion, and see how the guns are to be given out."

"Every man in Limbi wants a gun, and two-thirds of them would only shoot their nearest neighbors or pot themselves."

"I think I shall give two guns to every five-and-twenty men, and select the best shots."

Harvey agreed with him, and talking of military matters they strolled along.

Suddenly an old woman fantastically dressed, stepped in front of the boys.

"Who is this?" said Jack.

"Hush!" said Harvey, "Don't anger her."

"Why not?"

"It's Nuratella," said Harvey, under his breath.

"Who is she?" returned Jack, as much in the dark as ever.

"Nuratella is a sort of sorceress, witch, prophetess—

what you like. All I know is that the people here think a lot of her," replied Harvey.

Nuratella raised her arms, as if commanding silence.

She did not understand the English they were speaking, but she saw from their faces that they knew who she was, and that her appearance had produced some impression upon them.

CHAPTER XLII.

NURATELLA, THE WITCH.

WE have already hinted that all the inhabitants of the numerous islands in the East Indian Archipelago were strong believers in witchcraft.

Nuratella was regarded as a prophetess of the highest order.

She professed to have the power of divining future events, and had been known to still the wind when raging at its highest fury.

Perhaps her knowledge of the weather was superior to that of those around her, and she did not attempt the hazardous task of commanding the storm until she saw some indication of a cessation of the tempest.

At all events she imposed upon the ignorant beings amongst whom her lot was cast.

Her influence over them was remarkable.

Strange, weird, thrilling stories were told about her.

It was said that in her youth she had met with, and dared to love, an illustrious chief of the Pisangs.

For this offence she was condemned to death by her own countryman.

It was treason of the worst sort for a woman of Limbi to look favourably upon a Pisang warrior.

On a man, in fact, whose hands were red with the blood of her kindred.

She was led forth to die.

At the moment when the executioner had uplifted the fatal sword, a volume of light shot out from the sky.

The lightning, for such it was, struck the executioner, and killed him on the spot.

This was considered an interposition of Providence on her behalf.

She had called down fire from heaven.

The lurid flame was supposed to be of her own conjuring, and she was liberated in all haste.

Ever after she lived a secluded and wild life, but her influence as a witch was established.

All feared her, if none loved her.

It was suspected by some of the shrewdest among the Limbians that she was still in correspondence with the Pisangs.

That she could not forget her early love.

Sometimes the Pisangs obtained information of the movements of the people of Limbi in a mysterious manner.

Nuratella was known to set sail in a frail canoe, and be absent for several days.

Who so likely as she to visit Pisang and inform the chiefs there of the plans of their enemies?

She was allowed to attend the councils of her own people, and her advice was much valued.

Yet no one liked to denounce her, nor, had they done so, was there any proof of her guilt?

The boys had often heard of her strange and mysterious power.

They did not believe in her magical gifts, but they did not at the same time think it advisable to slight or offend her.

Far better would it have been for Jack if he had never listened to her.

"Well, mother, what do you want?" exclaimed Jack, addressing Nuratella in her own language.

"Follow me, and you shall quickly learn," she replied.

"Shall I come?" asked Harvey.

"Perhaps I had better ask the old girl," said Jack.

He put the question to Nuratella.

"No," she answered, decisively. "It is you I want. Let your friend return to his home."

"She says no," said Jack, addressing Harvey.

"So I heard. I suppose the old cat means you no harm," replied Harvey. "They don't speak too well of her, though they all funk her."

"She won't hurt me. What does it matter if she is a

witch, and rides on broomsticks? I don't think she'd find me a light weight if I ride behind."

"All right; you know best. Good-bye, old fellow."

Harvey shook his head as if he did not half like his friend to go away with Nuratella.

But Jack was not to be interfered with when he had made up his mind.

There were few things that frightened him, and as he said to himself, he was not going to be afraid of an old woman.

Nuratella led the way into the country, and walked for about a mile, keeping ahead of Jack, to whom she did not address a word.

Occasionally she turned her head to see if he was following her.

The road, was simply a rough path, a few large stones having been removed.

The ragged coral rock everywhere projected so completely through the thin soil that it was a wonder to Jack how his conductor could travel barefoot with such apparent ease.

They soon came to a circular hut, enclosed by a low stone wall.

It was the most wretched abode for a human being that could possibly be imagined.

The walls, instead of being made of boards or flattened bamboos, as in the town of Tompano, were composed of small sticks, about three feet high, driven into the ground.

These supported a conical roof, thatched with palm leaves.

An ugly-looking pig, with long bristles on his back, was raking about this detestable hovel.

Near the hut was a burial place.

A low wall enclosed a small angular plot that was filled with earth.

This contained one or more graves, each of which had for its foot and head-stones, small, square, pyramidal blocks of wood, with the apex fixed in the ground.

A pack of wolf-like dogs saluted Jack with a fierce yelping and barking as he approached the miserable dwelling.

A word from Nuratella calmed them.

Sitting down upon a rude block of stone outside her

dwelling, she motioned Jack to stand before her, which he did.

Perhaps if she had been talking to any of her countrymen, she would have had recourse to some mystic rites.

She rightly judged, however, that on one of Jack's education and sense such conduct would not make much impression.

Nevertheless there was something weird if not awful about the hag.

"They say she was good-looking once," thought Jack; "if so, it must have been a precious long while ago, and no mistake."

"Young man from the great kingdom over the sea, where the lightning owns the power of your wise men, and machines carry you faster than the bird can fly, listen to the words of Nuratella, the sorceress of Limbi," she exclaimed.

The speech showed that she had enjoyed some intercourse with white men, and had gained an insight into their civilization.

But when, where, or how it was difficult to say.

"At your service, mother," answered Jack. "Ease her! stop her! go ahead!" he added in English, as he was unable to put the latter into what he called "understandable" Limbian.

"You are going to place yourself at the head of my people and invade Pisang," she continued.

"It didn't require a witch to tell me that, when all the island knows it," Jack answered.

"And the Pisangs, too. They are prepared for your coming."

"Are they?" Jack replied. "Have you been kind enough to give them information?"

Nuratella raised her arm threateningly.

"What have I to do with the enemies of my country?" she exclaimed. "To me it is given to pierce the future and to know what has happened in the past, as well as what is taking place in the present."

"Do you mean to sit there calmly, old girl," said Jack, "and tell me that you can prophecy?"

"Put me to the test," she answered. "Ask me anything you like, and as I reply to you, so will I be judged."

Jack thought a moment.

"I'll ask her about Emily," he thought.

Nuratella regarded him with her wild-looking eyes, which seemed to possess the fire of insanity, tempered at times by gleams of reason.

"Can you tell me if there is a white captive in Pisang?" he said.

"There are two," she replied.

"Two! Men or women?"

"One a man, the other a fair-haired girl, barely seventeen."

"Perhaps you've been there and seen them," cried Jack, who guessed at once that she referred to Mr. Scratchley and his daughter Emily.

Again Nuratella threatened him with her upraised arm.

"Boy," she said, "to whom do you speak? Many leagues divide Limbi from Pisang."

"But you've got a boat of your own."

"I tell you that I know them not. The Pisangs and I never meet."

"Well," said Jack, impatiently; "cut along. What have you brought me here for?"

There was a certain bluntness about Jack which would not be checked by any amount of murmuring.

Nuratella had thought to impress, but she found that she had signally failed.

"You love this fair-haired girl," she exclaimed.

"You're not far out there," replied Jack.

"And she loves you."

"That's stale news," replied Jack imperturbably, "though how you got to know it is a puzzler."

"You must meet again. Emily—that is your darling's name—is in peril," continued Nuratella.

"Of what nature?"

"The persecution of a wicked and bad man."

"Hunston."

The name escaped Jack involuntarily.

"That is he," continued Nuratella. "Hunston wishes to make Emily his wife. She, mindful of you, will not consent."

"Of course not."

"But Hunston is the chief adviser of the Pisangs," Nuratella proceeded. "He is their great chief. What he orders, they do."

"I feared this," said Jack, almost tearfully. "I have been wrong to delay so long. We should have attacked the Pisang brutes long ago, but I'll give them a lesson."

His tone was bitter, and his manner almost ferocious.

"Will you not try to save your Emily?" asked the witch, watching his growing anger with a smile.

"What's the use of asking such a stupid question?" he replied sharply.

"Would you like to see her?"

"When?" he cried.

"At once. This very night. My power will suffice to bring her here."

"Here? On this island?"

"Yes, here; at this very spot. I will ask the spirits with whom I deal to transport her hither."

"Spirits be blowed!" Jack said in English. Adding immediately afterwards, "I don't care how you do it, so long as you get Emily."

"It shall be done. I swear it to you. I, Nuratella, say that you shall meet the girl with the flaxen hair here, when the darkness falls upon the earth."

"I will reward you for it," said Jack.

"No reward does Nuratella want. You will lead their victorious army against the Pisangs, and Limbi will enjoy the blessings of peace."

"I'll do my best for it," Jack answered.

"Come hither at sundown, and you shall clasp your Emily in your arms."

"If you can do this, I shall say you are a very clever old woman, and our fortune-tellers are not a patch upon you, but——"

He hesitated.

She interrogated him with her eyes.

"If you trifle with me," he continued, regarding her with a savage look, "I will shoot you with as little compunction as I would knock that bird off his perch."

As he spoke, he raised his gun and fired at a bright-plumaged bird in a thicket.

The creature fell dead almost at his feet.

Nuratella saw that she had made an impression upon her listener by the mention of Emily's name.

She followed up her advantage.

"If I, by my arts, contrive that you shall see Emily," she continued, "you must promise me one thing."

"What is it?" asked Jack.

"Do not mention the circumstance to anyone."

"I generally tell my friend Harvey everything," he exclaimed hesitatingly.

"This time you must not do so."

"I should like him to come with me."

"No, no!" said the witch imperiously. "You will break the charm, if you do not come unattended."

"What's the odds?" Jack replied.

"You must trust me. Are you afraid of a poor old woman?" said Nuratella with a scornful smile.

"I'm afraid of nothing and nobody, if it comes to that. You shall have your way. I'll come alone."

"And you will keep your purpose a secret?"

"I will."

"Can I depend on you?" she asked.

"I am not in the habit of breaking my word," replied Jack. "If I say a thing, I mean it; so good-bye, mother, for the present. I shall be here at dark."

"For your own sake and that of Emily, mind you do not fail," she answered, impressively.

Jack turned on his heel, and walked back to the town of Tompano.

His mind was filled with conflicting emotions.

At one moment he was delighted with the expectation of meeting Emily, whom he had believed to be on one of the islands ever since he read the message from the sea; and the next he feared treachery.

Though what shape this danger would take he could not say.

It was a great fact to have ascertained that Emily had really been wrecked, and that he was near her.

His heart warmed towards the little playfellow of his youth.

With the romantic passion of a young man he loved her dearly.

His blood boiled when he thought that she was in the power of Hunston and his associates.

To liberate her he would sacrifice everything.

CHAPTER LXIII.

MRS. MOLE NUMBER TWO.

JACK was very thoughtful when he reached his house in Tompano.

His native servant told him that Harvey had gone to Mr. Mole's habitation.

Having nothing better to do, he strolled down in that direction.

When he neared the house, he heard the sound of crockery being smashed.

An earthenware pan flew through the window near his head.

"That's a close shave," he muttered. "I suppose Ambonia's showing her nasty temper."

Harvey met him at the door.

"Look out Jack," he said; "Mrs. Mole Number Two is going it in fine style."

"What's the row?" asked Jack.

"Ambonia slipped into Alfura, who has gone to an aunt's somewhere near here, and now Mole's catching it hot."

Jack stepped inside.

Every article of furniture in the room was upset, and Mr. Mole was standing in a corner, in vain striving to stem the storm.

A bucket of water had been thrown over him, which had brought him to his senses, and the effect of the spirit he had drunk was going off.

Ambonia, looking like a fury, held a handful of her husband's hair in her hand, and occasionally amused herself by throwing about in various directions anything she could lay her hands on.

"My dear sir," said Jack, "what is the meaning of this scene? Is Mrs. Mole mad?"

"You may well ask that question, Harkaway," replied Mr. Mole. "I was a little overcome when you brought me home. Alfura took my part, and she has been obliged to fly the house. Mrs. Mole *secundus*, as we used to say at school, is behaving very strangely, but now there is not

much more left to break, she will probably calm down soon."

Ambonia was doing a war dance, and she chattered all the time like a monkey in her native language.

Presently the leg of a chair caught Jack on the side of the head.

"Draw it mild," he observed, rubbing the injured part

"Don't stand it, Harkaway. Resent it," cried Mr. Mole. "I would if I were you."

"It's for you, sir," replied Jack, "to keep order in your own household."

"I can't do it. It's beyond me."

"Shall I put her in the water-butt?" asked Jack.

"We haven't got one. That article of civilization is *minus* in this establishment——"

Mr. Mole would have said more, but a bunch of ripe cocoanuts hit him on the nose, and he held the injured organ with both hands while he capered about with the pain.

"That's a flop—if you like," said Harvey grinning.

"Never laugh at a fellow-creature in distress, Harvey," exclaimed Mr. Mole. "I wish you had my nose. Oh! my nose, my poor ill-used nose!"

Ambonia advanced with a long light bamboo, and hit her angry spouse on the head with it.

"One for his nob," remarked Harvey.

Jack advanced, thinking Mr. Mole would be seriously injured, and caught Ambonia in his arms.

He drew her to the window and gave her a kiss.

"Now, my little beauty," said Jack, holding her tightly, "what are you going to do?"

"I shall do nothing. I am calm now," Ambonia replied. "If he would only treat me with kindness, I should not behave like that. He likes Alfura best, and—and——"

"And you're jealous, eh?"

She nodded her head while she lay passively in Jack's arms.

"Will you promise me not to kick up any more row?" asked Jack.

"It is over now," she sighed.

"Bravo!" cried Harvey. "The way to manage a woman all the world over is to be kind to her."

Mr. Mole emerged from his corner.

He looked very grave.

"Harkaway," he exclaimed, "what are you doing with my wife?"

"Doing, sir?"

"Yes; you have her in your arms."

"You may take her, sir. I am not ambitious of the honour," replied Jack.

Mr. Mole ventured to embrace his spouse, but she no sooner felt him touch her than she began to scream and kick.

He laid her down on the floor, and the screaming and kicking continued.

She was in a fit of violent hysterics.

"Oh, Lord! what shall I do?" cried Mr. Mole.

He stood with his hands upraised, the picture of despair.

Ambonia went on with her hysterical symptoms.

"Holler, boys!" said Harvey; "here's another guy!"

"A pair of 'em," remarked Jack, drily.

"Ambonia's in high strikes," continued Harvey, "and Mr. Mole's——"

"Silence, Harvey," in anger, cried Mole. "When you speak of my wife, mention her as Mrs. Mole. To me only is she Ambonia."

"All right, sir. Sit down, and take it easy for a spell," replied Harvey. "She'll be a good ten minutes before she comes round, and she'll have worn herself out then and want to go to bed."

"It's a mercy," said Mr. Mole, "for which I am devoutly thankful. Make fast the window, Harvey. I will fasten the door, and we'll adjourn to another apartment. Be sure you fasten the window. I should not like Mrs. Mole to be interrupted."

"No fear, sir; only isn't it rather heartless, not to say brutal, to leave her like this?"

"Harvey," replied Mr. Mole, "I have no hesitation in saying that you're a humbug."

"Say it again, sir," answered Harvey. "We're old friends, and I shan't punch your head."

They left Ambonia in her hysterical fit, and locked the room up.

On a table in another apartment were some very fine shell fish, resembling enormously large oysters.

They had just been brought up from the sea-shore, and laid open in their shells for Ambonia's refreshment.

"Ah! oysters! Big ones, though," remarked Mr Mole. "Try one, Harkaway."

Jack looked at the shell fish and took one up.

It was about fifty times the size of one English oyster, and he did not know how to get it into his mouth.

"How am I to do it, sir?" he asked.

"Bolt it," suggested Harvey.

Jack made an effort, and the oyster disappeared.

He gasped for breath, and Harvey patted him on the back with a large board.

"How do you feel?"

"Very thankful it's down; and even now I can't help thinking I've swallowed a small baby," answered Jack.

Harvey laughed, and Jack continued, "Ta, ta, sir; I must toddle."

"Don't leave me, Harkaway. Why go so soon?" said Mr. Mole.

"Urgent private affairs, sir."

"You have rendered me a service. You have soothed the savage breast, Harkaway, and it is the only gleam of sunshine I have yet had in my married life."

"Sorry I can't stay, sir," answered Jack. "You must knock under."

"There she is again," cried Harvey.

As he spoke a furious yelling was heard, and a desperate kicking at the door of the room in which Ambonia was shut.

"I'll leave you to it, sir," exclaimed Jack, with a laugh.

In vain Mr. Mole tried to stop him.

Taking Harvey's arm, he left the house, and the happy couple within it.

CHAPTER XLIV.

JACK WON'T TAKE ADVICE.

As Jack and Harvey proceeded towards their own house in Tompano, the latter could not fail to perceive that his friend was full of thought and care.

"Has anything happened?" he asked.

"No," replied Jack, rather more sharply than Harvey liked. "What should happen?"

"You need not snap me up like that. I only asked kindly, but I forgot for the moment that you went away with that old witch hag, and I daresay that has upset your royal highness."

"Suppose it has, what then?"

"You are more of an ass than I took you to be. She is a rank impostor, and is said to be friendly to the Pisangs. Has she advised you not to undertake the invasion, warning you that you would be beaten?"

Jack made no answer.

"Oh! if you have lost your tongue, and don't like to speak, please yourself," said Harvey. "I'll talk to Monday."

"Don't be annoyed, Dick," exclaimed Jack, at last. "I can't tell you what passed between Nuratella and myself."

"Why not?"

"Because I promised I wouldn't."

"That is a pity. Two heads are better than one," said Harvey; "and I might have been able to advise you. Not that I want to know anything out of idle curiosity."

"No; you never did, Dick," said Jack with a smile.

"That's what I call a nasty snack," replied Harvey.

"Well, you know you were a nice cup of tea at Craw-cour's, Dick; and if you could get to the far end of anything, you always did."

"You mean to say that I was a regular old washer-woman. That's not kind, Jack; and I did not expect it from you. If we are to be really friends, there ought to be perfect confidence between us."

"So there should be; and so there shall be. Only wait for to-night," rejoined Jack. "I'll tell you all then."

He shook Harvey cordially by the hand, and the latter's wounded dignity got better.

"I don't think you meant to worry me," he said. "Still I wish you would take my advice."

"What is it?"

"Don't listen to anything that old hag says."

"Too late. I have made her a distinct promise," replied Jack.

"Are you going to meet her again?"

"Don't ask me any questions, Dick, there's a good fellow, because I can't answer them."

"Very well. I'll dry up," was Harvey's response.

When they reached the house, they found Monday, whose eager face denoted that he had important news to communicate.

"Oh! Mast' Jack," he exclaimed, "there have been um fight; um sea-fight."

"Where?" asked Jack.

"Off the island. Two boats Pisangs meet one boat Limbians. They fight quite close here."

"Which licked?" questioned Harvey.

"Um Pisang lick, 'cos they more number; though we kill one, two, three, four."

He counted on his fingers as he spoke.

"Killed four, eh? And the others got off. What did they want cruising round our coast?" said Jack.

"There's mischief brewing," remarked Harvey.

"We'll double the guards round the city to-night," said Jack. "It won't do to be surprised."

"I don't like those fellows being so near us. It doesn't look healthy," observed Harvey.

"Nor I. It isn't rosy, and it is like their cheek to risk it."

"They kill three our men; others come back with news," Monday went on.

"Did they see Hunston with them?" asked Jack.

Monday nodded his head violently, as he always did when excited.

"Yes, they say white man chief—Tuan Biza white face with them," he answered.

Jack walked up and down the room impatiently.

"I don't half like it," he exclaimed, as if talking to himself. "There is something in all this."

After a time, feeling fatigued with the heat, he threw himself down upon a rude bed, telling Harvey that he should be obliged if he would rouse him at sunset.

He was soon asleep.

In a couple of hours the sun sank to rest, and Harvey touched him on the shoulder.

He jumped up, uttering the name "Emily."

"You're dreaming," said Harvey.

"I believe I was," replied Jack, rubbing his eyes. "I thought Emily was by my side."

"Are you going out?" asked Harvey, as he saw him put on his cap.

"Yes; I shan't be long. Don't funk about me."

"I can't help it. You're going to see that witch Nuratella. It's no use denying it."

"You're welcome to your own opinion, Dick," replied Jack.

"Well," answered Harvey, "God bless you, Jack. I wish you would take my advice, that's all, or——"

"What?"

"You might let me come with you, if there is any danger."

"But there isn't."

"I'm not so sure of that. Nuratella has been suspected before now of playing her own people false. The Pisangs have been seen off the island this very day. Hunston was with them; and, hang it all, if there is any danger, you might let me share it with you."

"You've got a good heart, Dick, and I am very grateful to you. However, don't fret on my account. I shall be all right," replied Jack.

Squeezing his friend's hand, he rushed out of the house, leaving Harvey gazing with pity after him.

He took the direction of the witch's dwelling, and was soon out of sight.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE MEETING.

NURATELLA was anxiously awaiting his appearance.

Still sitting on the rugged stone, she did not seem to have changed her position since he left her.

"Well, mother," exclaimed Jack, "here I am, like Regulus returning to Carthage—though, as that is a little beyond your comprehension, I will say that I resemble the bad penny which is sure to turn up, whether it's wanted or no."

"Are you alone?" she inquired.

"Yes."

"You have no one within call?"

"Not a soul."

"Good!" exclaimed the old woman, over whose forbidden countenance stole an expression of satisfaction.

The shades of night had fallen with the rapidity peculiar to the tropics after sunset.

It was difficult to discern objects at a few yards, distance.

Nuratella clapped her hands.

Once, twice, three times.

At the third signal a fairylike form stepped out of a thicket of trees to Jack's right, and though the light, airy European garments were torn and travel-stained, he knew that a countrywoman of his own was near.

How his heart throbbed at that moment.

"Emily," he ejaculated.

The form halted when close to him, and then as if obedient to an irresistible impulse, she threw herself into his arms.

"Oh, Jack," she exclaimed, "under what circumstances do we meet again!"

"They're not very live'y, certainly," he said. "But I am so delighted at seeing you that hardships vanish, and I seem to be treading on enchanted ground."

"I have so much to tell you," she continued, "though I am afraid I ought not to waste precious time."

"Tell me, at least, how you came here."

"It was decided by the Pisang council that I should be given up to the Limbians, where a man named Hunston informed me that I should meet you."

"That is unlike Hunston. He's not usually so generous," said Jack musingly.

"And it is unlike the treatment I have received all along from the Pisangs. My father is dying, I fear, from their ill-usage."

"Mr. Scratchley?"

"Yes; and my poor mother went down in the wreck."

"Have you any reason to think there is a plot hatching against us?" asked Jack.

"Indeed, I fear so," returned Emily; "for we came over to Limbi, as they call this island, in two boats, full of armed men."

"And you encountered a hostile boat, which you drove off?"

"We did."

"How were you conducted hither?" asked Jack.

"By Hunston, and one they called Tuan Biza. They brought me here, and left me with this old woman, who told me to remain in the thicket till she clapped her hands."

"What became of your guides?"

"They said good-bye, and left me. I cannot understand their generosity; it seems too good to be true. But had we not better fly at once?" said Emily.

"At once. We will talk at our ease. Take my arm, dear Emily. We shall soon be in Tompano. It is not far off. I know every inch of the way; and once amongst friends, we can enjoy our newly-found happiness."

Emily placed a trembling hand on Jack's arm, and without taking any further notice of Nuratella, who, by the way, had disappeared, they turned to make their escape.

Suddenly dark forms appeared behind them.

A voice exclaimed, "Not so fast, my fine fellow. You and I have a score to settle."

Jack's heart leaped in his bosom.

"Betrayed, by Heaven!" he cried.

He faced the foe, but ere he had time to draw weapon in his defence, a heavy blow on the head felled him to the ground where he fell insensible.

Emily uttered shriek upon shriek.

Her misery was complete when she saw Jack borne off by the Pisangs through the darkness.

It was for her sweet sake that he had ventured into this ambuscade.

The Pisangs, with serpentine cunning, had made her a decoy.

"Stop that noise!" exclaimed the harsh voice of Hunston, as he seized her brutally by the arm.

"Oh, do not kill him," she replied.

"Not yet. I'll make him feel his position and suffer a little first. Come along; you've done your work, and we must get back to Pisang."

Again Emily uttered piercing shrieks.

"Hold that row, miss," exclaimed Hunston again, "or I shall have to hit you on the head as I did King Harkaway. Be quiet, for your own sake; you will neither do yourself nor your friend any good."

Emily remained silent, and was hurried along a narrow path which led to the coast.

"Did you think," continued Hunston, "that I was such a very innocent baby as to give you up to the only man I hate like poison?"

"I did not know what amount of villany you were capable of," she answered.

"You'll know in time. You'll find it all out when you're my wife."

"Heaven defend me from such a fate, I would die sooner," she cried, horror-stricken.

"You'll have to do one or the other. Death or marriage. Take your choice when the time comes."

Emily shuddered.

"It was not a bad dodge of mine to get Harkaway into our power," he went on with a loud laugh.

"It was mean and cowardly to use me as a means of entrapping him."

"All's fair in love and war. I knew he'd nibble at the hook if you were the bait at the end of it."

"What will be his fate?" she ventured to ask.

"Death? A cruel, horrible and lingering death, unless——"

"Unless?" she repeated under her breath, as her companion broke off abruptly.

"Unless you consent to be mine."

His fierce grey eyes seemed to pierce her soul in the darkness.

"Then he must die, and I will perish with him," she murmured.

As the words left her lips a feeling of faintness came over her, and she would have fallen had not Hunston caught her.

She lay like a log in his arms.

He carried her insensible form for the remainder of the distance.

The Pisangs were waiting for him.

Springing into the boat which was nearest to him, he gave the word and the sails were set.

One boat contained Harkaway, the other his beloved Emily.

They were both in the power of Hunston, from whose tender mercies they had as much gentleness to expect as the dove receives from the cruel hawk.

It was an infamous stratagem.

But at the same time it was a clever and important capture.

CHAPTER XLVI.

HARVEY GETS UNEASY.

THE hours glided by and nothing was seen of Jack.

Harvey began to grow uneasy, as did Monday.

"Something happen to Mast' Jack. What um be?" asked the black.

"I more than half suspect that treachery has been at work," replied Harvey.

"Where him go?"

"I am nearly sure that he went to see Nuratella."

"She bad woman, sare," said Monday. "We all much 'fraid Nuratella, because she um witch-prophetess."

"Wasn't she a friend of the Pisangs once?"

"Yes, one very great friend Tuan Biza, and now she go to their island in um boat."

"Do you know where she hangs out—where she lives I mean?" asked Harvey.

"Yes, Monday him know."

"All right. Let's lie down till daybreak, and we'll go and look after him. Poor Jack! I shall never forgive myself if anything has befallen him. I ought to have followed with half a dozen rifles, whether he liked it or no."

In spite of Harvey's impatience, nothing could be done in the dark.

He slept little, and he was up as soon as the first rays of light streamed in through the mat-covered windows.

"Now, Mon, look alive!" he said.

"Alive him is, sare," replied Monday, yawning.

They ate a piece of rough bread and drank some water, then they were ready for the start.

It did not take them long to reach the witch's dwelling.

She was nowhere about, and they supposed had not yet arisen.

"What's this?" cried Harvey, casting his eyes on the ground.

The object that attracted his attention was a piece of

paper, such as might be torn from the pocket-book of a European.

On it was something written in pencil.

"English, by Jove!" he said, "and in a lady's handwriting too."

He did not hesitate to read its contents, which ran thus :—

"I, Emily Scratchley, having fallen into the hands of the Pisangs, have been liberated by them to-day, and left in concealment in this thicket, until an old woman shall give me a signal that my old friend Jack Harkaway, who I hear is on this island, comes to take me to the chief town of Limbi.

"Feeling doubtful about the good faith of the Pisangs, whom I have since my captivity found cruel and treacherous, I fear some villany is intended, and write these hurried lines in the hope that some friend may find them, in the event of any foul play taking place."

Harvey set his teeth tightly together.

"I see it all now, Monday," said he.

"What him all 'bout, sare?" asked the black.

"Nuratella has helped the Pisangs to take Jack a prisoner."

"Mast' Jack taken! That bad news. But we go after him and lib'rate him, or we kill and burn all Pisangs."

"Of course we will; but they may kill him before we get there."

"Look here, sare! Mast' Harvey, come here, quick! See 'um blood on the ground!" cried Monday, excited at the red-looking spots he saw.

Harvey came to his side, and regarded them mournfully.

"It's as clear as daylight," he observed. "Jack's been taken by surprise, and they've tapped his claret for him. Well, it can't be helped."

"Matabella go to King Lanindyer, and he make Nuratella say all she know," said Monday. "No one like her. All glad her die."

"I'd roast her over a slow fire. Does she live in that kennel?"

He pointed to the hovel as he spoke.

"That where she lives."

"Have her out, Monday. We'll take her back with us

to the town, lest she gives us the slip, and goes to join her precious friends the Pisangs."

Monday hung back.

He could not forget the superstitions of his youth, and the prejudices of his nation.

"What are you afraid of?" asked Harvey contemptuously.

"She put some charm on me. Nuratella very great witch. She make and un-make storms. She hold the lightning in her hand," replied Monday trembling.

"Go on, you great cake!" said Harvey. "I'll dig her out, witch or no witch, or I'll burn her den about her ears."

Putting his shoulder against one side of the hut, Harvey gave it a shove, which made it rock like a poplar in a storm.

"Come out, you old cat!" he said in the native language.

There was no answer.

Not being in a humour to be trifled with, Harvey gave the hovel another shove, and down it went in a heap.

Presently the form of Nuratella appeared from a thicket a few yards off, the same in which Emily had been concealed, and from whence she had watched the destruction of her house with rising wrath.

"Why do you come to my dwelling and scatter ruin around?" she asked.

"I am quite ready to answer for what I have done to the Tuan Biza of this island and his chiefs assembled in council," replied Harvey.

"Do you not fear my power?" asked Nuratella, still more threateningly.

"No more than that," said Harvey, snapping his fingers.

"I could make the earth open and swallow you up. I could call down the lightning from the sky, and summon wild beasts from the forest, together with venomous serpents, to destroy your life."

"Go ahead, then. Let the music strike up and the show begin," exclaimed Harvey.

Nuratella glared at him with the savageness of a tiger.

"The fact is you are an impostor," continued Harvey. "I repeat that I am ready to answer for what I have done and mean to do, though I don't think you will get off so easily."

"Go, rash boy," she exclaimed. "I have no quarrel with you."

"Oh, it's like that, is it?" Harvey said, derisively. "You find that you can't frighten me, so you slacken sail. Now it's my turn. I don't boast of what I can do; you'll see in time. So come along with me."

He seized her by the arm, and attempted to draw her along.

But she threw herself on the ground, and refused to stir.

Like most sailors, Harvey generally had some cord in his pocket.

This he produced, and quickly tied her hands and legs together.

Then he ordered Monday to lift up her head while he took her feet.

In this way they carried her to Tompano, in spite of her cries, struggles, and protestations.

They proceeded at once to the king's palace, where the king and his chiefs were assembled in council.

A large crowd followed them, hearing that Nuratella was a prisoner, and that the white chief had mysteriously disappeared.

Harvey demanded an audience, which was granted him.

Leaving the witch in a passage guarded by Monday, he entered the great hall.

All eyes were instantly turned upon him, for alarming rumours had already reached the council.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE WITCH'S DOOM.

BOTH Harvey and Jack possessed great influence over the savages of Limbi.

Cruel and vindictive as they were to their enemies, they nevertheless possessed the invaluable properties of gratitude.

The boys had saved and treated kindly Matabella, the heir apparent, the son of their Tuan Biza, the Prince of Wales of Limbi.

This was in itself sufficient to make them popular.

In addition to this, they had given them powder and shot ; they were going to lead them against their old, old enemies, the Pisangs.

We can fancy the English in the days of their hatred to France, when war was waging, hailing an ally in a similar manner.

Besides this, the boys were not at all haughty in their manner.

They did not show or boast of their superiority in cultivation, and the arts of civilization.

On the contrary.

They made friends with the simple islanders, and endeared themselves to one and all.

Mr. Mole, who, no one knew exactly why, was accounted a great chief, had married two princesses.

It was gravely debated whether or not he should have a third wife.

The Limbians thought they could not have afforded him a greater honour.

Mr. Mole thought otherwise.

He had certain domestic reasons of his own for thinking so.

But he had not yet found out the secret of governing a wife.

The Limbians did not hesitate to lay a bamboo cane across the shoulders of their refractory spouses.

Mr. Mole had yet to make that important discovery.

Unlike the chiefs of the Red Indians, about whom we have read so much, the inhabitants of the great Indian Archipelago were fond of talking.

They did not confine themselves to the utterance of grunts and the guttural "yah yah !" with which we have been nauseated.

They were genial, and, what is more, they possessed a good deal of sound common sense.

Harvey told his tale as clearly and shortly as he could.

He had to struggle with and keep down his very natural indignation at the outrage to which his friend Jack had been subjected through a Limbian woman.

He translated the letter that Emily had written, alluded to the meeting with Nuratella, and ended by declaring his conviction that she was the authoress of the mischief.

After some consultation the chiefs were of the same opinion.

The religious men or priests who were members of the council had long been patrons of Nuratella.

It was their barbarous custom once a year to sacrifice a human being to the evil spirits.

The time was at hand.

They were searching for a victim.

The custom was, after the harvest of corn and fruits, to carry a certain quantity of sugar-cane, rice, fowls, eggs, pigs, dogs, and a living being to the southeast point of the island.

The wretched creature selected for these rites was left on the shore, bound hand and foot, for the crocodiles to devour.

After the consultation of the council, Nuratella was ordered to be brought in.

She was unbound and surrounded with a strong guard, which rendered her escape impossible.

Some of the chiefs feared her fabled power, but the majority did not evince any emotion.

When the case was stated to her she made no reply.

Harvey stood up and said: "The silence of Nuratella is proof of her guilt. I demand her life shall be taken, as in all probability my poor friend by this time has ceased to exist."

"Confess," exclaimed the king Lanindyer.

"Of what use would it be for me to make any confession, when you are all hungering for my blood like a pack of wild beasts," she replied.

"Do you deny the charge which has been brought against you?" asked another chief.

"I do," she replied.

"Let her be put to the torture," said the king.

"No," cried Harvey. "Let her suffer the penalty of her crime, but torture would be barbarous."

"I have said it," answered the king calmly. "Let the officers do their duty."

Nuratella was dragged into another apartment, and her cries were soon heard at intervals.

She was beaten with bamboos.

Fire was placed under her feet.

Red-hot stones were applied to various parts of her

body, and a band of twisted reeds was tied so tightly round her forehead that her eyes threatened to burst from their sockets.

At length her fortitude, great though it was, gave way. She confessed her intrigue with the Pisangs.

She admitted that she had beguiled Jack to her house on purpose to betray him, and she declared that she alone was to blame in the matter.

When this was made known, the indignant council clamoured loudly for her instant death. The cry was taken up by the populace out of doors.

Protected by the soldiers, she was led, accompanied by almost all the inhabitants of Tompano, to the seashore.

Near this fatal spot was the mouth of a small river, where the crocodiles were wont to assemble in large numbers.

She was securely bound, and laid upon the beach.

When the procession started, Harvey ran to Mr. Mole's house, and found him looking out at the doorway, while Alfura and Ambonia, who had made friends again, were anxiously looking at the crowd.

Mr. Mole had succeeded in restoring peace, for a time, to his distracted household, and he listened to the alarming rumours with impatience.

He hailed Harvey's arrival with delight.

"I say, sir," cried Harvey, "come along."

"Come where? What is all this? Why fret the angry crowd, as I think my friend Horace has it?" replied Mr. Mole.

"Haven't you heard the news?"

"Not I."

"At least if I can't save Harkaway, I will avenge his death!" exclaimed Harvey.

"Dear me! Is Harkaway in danger? Don't say that. With all his faults he was a fine fellow. Don't tell me, Harvey, that he is——"

A tear sprang to Mr. Mole's eyes.

He could not pronounce the word "dead."

"Come with me, sir," said Harvey, "and I will tell you all about it as we go along."

Harvey quickly told Mr. Mole the distressing news.

"The wretch!" exclaimed the latter, when he heard of Nuratella's treachery, "she deserves to die, but I wish

they wouldn't do the thing in this cruel way. I think I shall interfere and stop it."

"Stop your grandmother!" replied Harvey.

"But an execution ought to be properly conducted."

Mr. Mole walked along thoughtfully.

They were in the rear of the crowd, but the shouts of the people were distinctly audible.

The doom of the witch had been decreed. Execution was to follow soon upon judgment.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE PREY OF THE CROCODILES.

PRESENTLY Mr. Mole said—

"Hunston is with these Pisangs, is he not?"

"Yes, and directs all their councils," replied Harvey.

"I thought so. Well, surely Harkaway's life will be safe in his hands."

"Will it?—over the left," answered Harvey.

"Do you mean to tell me that he will not spare an old friend?"

"You know all about the tatooing and how we had to kick him out after he tried to murder us, and how he made an attack on the castle?"

"Yes, I have heard of those things."

"Is it likely, then, that he'll show Jack any mercy?" answered Harvey. "I believe Hunston has become as ferocious a brute as any one of the Pisangs he is amongst."

"Do you, indeed?" said Mr. Mole.

"I do, and I think he would not hesitate to eat Jack if the others did."

"That's going a little too far, Harvey," said Mr. Mole with a half-smile.

"By mixing with savages may not a man get savage himself?"

"I hope we are not so."

"I mean a vicious man," replied Harvey.

"Let us hope that Harkaway is in no danger, and that he will soon be restored to us."

"I wish I could think so. I fear, however, we shall

only find his head in the house of some chief. At all events I shall hurry on the expedition for the invasion of Pisang."

"Do so, by all means," rejoined Mr. Mole; "and now I recollect that a short time ago I elected to remain here as governor of the island in the absence of the fighting men."

"That was your wish, sir."

"It is so no longer," continued Mr. Mole. "When one of my companions, one of my dearest friends, I may say, is in danger in a foreign country; a boy whose mind was educated under my own personal supervision, I can not remain idle."

"Bravo, sir! Your're a trump!" cried Harvey.

"Harvey, do you know my motto?"

"No, sir. What is it?"

"It is," replied Mr. Mole, "'death before dishonour.' I may not be a fighting man, but I will hurl spear and draw trigger for Harkaway."

"Good again, sir! You're made of the right stuff!"

"And I shall get away from my wives," continued Mr. Mole, as if speaking to himself.

"Oh! that's it, sir!" said Harvey laughing.

"What did I say?" asked Mr. Mole in some confusion.

"Nothing, sir," replied Harvey. "Here we are."

Mr. Mole looked up, and beheld a vast concourse of people on the seashore.

They pushed their way through the crowd, the soldiers making room for the Tuan Biza of the white men.

A ring of armed men kept the throng back from a certain point.

Nuratella was already lying bound on the sand, the hot tropical sun streaming down mercilessly on her upturned face.

Her youth had been a guilty love.

Her life had been an imposition and a cheat.

Her death was to be an atonement.

The people were at such a distance from the shore, that they could only see the dim outlines of the wretched victim.

The chiefs were assembled in a group somewhat nearer.

To these Harvey and Mr. Mole attached themselves.

As the tide rose, the bodies of the crocodiles could be seen rolling sluggishly up and down.

Presently they would scent their victim.

Then her end would draw near.

Not far off was the river of which we have spoken, and which drew the rainfall down from the hills.

As the water began to circle in ripples round Nuratella, the excitement of the onlookers was intense.

Scarcely a word was spoken by the vast assembly.

Occasionally the priests uttered a low, monotonous chant

At length two crocodiles saw the body and advanced towards it.

There was a snap of the huge jaws, and a dreadful shriek.

This was repeated.

Nuratella's cries redoubled as first an arm and then a leg was torn away.

Other crocodiles, attracted by the smell of blood, approached.

Soon the cries ceased.

The witch was still, and though the cruel fangs of the monsters tore her flesh, she felt them not.

Nuratella was dead.

Turning to Harvey, the king said—

“Are you satisfied?”

Harvey had turned his head away from the sickening sight.

“Yes,” he muttered, feebly.

A gong was loudly beaten as a signal that justice had been done.

Loud shouts rent the air, and the crowd, who had just before thrilled to the marrow of their bones, experienced a sense of relief.

“Let us get out of this,” said Mr. Mole.

He and Harvey retreated along the shore, and tried to forget what they had seen by listening to the ripple of the waves as they broke on the beach.

“At least she deserved it,” remarked Harvey.

“No doubt; but it was horrible for all that. I thought I should have fainted when that first crocodile took off her leg with as much ease as a surgeon at an hospital would amputate a limb.”

“I’ve no pity for her,” said Harvey. “I’ve only got to think of Jack, and I shouldn’t care if she had got to die over again.”

"Remember, Harvey, what you said about people living amongst savages and becoming like them," said Mr. Mole warningly.

"But isn't it enough to make a fellow wild?" began Harvey impatiently.

"No, it is not enough," interrupted Mr. Mole. "We are told to forgive our enemies seventy times seven."

"Then you'd better forgive Mrs. Ambonia Mole the next time she goes into her tantrums and tears your hair."

Mr. Mole was silent.

"That's a closer," thought Harvey.

As they neared the city they were met by Monday, who had come out to look for them.

"Well, Monday, old man," exclaimed Harvey, what's your opinion of things in general?"

"Not up to much, sare. Me miss Mast' Jack. Me grieve much. Monday very bad."

"So am I, and that's the truth."

"The king has decided to start to-night with all men for Pisang. That good news," continued Monday.

"Has he, though? Then your governor's a brick, Monday," cried Harvey joyfully.

"Yes," said Mr. Mole; "that is indeed cheerful intelligence, and I will solace myself with a drink of that rum I see sticking out of your pocket, my worthy but somewhat dusky friend."

Monday had a flask in his pocket, for he had thrown an old jacket of Harvey's over his shoulders, the sun being very hot, and Monday not being disinclined to clothing when he could get it.

"Me not know, sare," he replied; "it Mast' Harvey's old jacket, Monday take him."

Mr. Mole received the flask, drank once, and then took another dip, and sighed deeply, while he put the flask in his own pocket.

"Circulate the liquor, sir!" exclaimed Harvey.

"Ah, pardon me! It was a fit of abstraction," replied Mr. Mole, being detected in his base attempt to appropriate it all to himself.

The spirit was afterwards handed to Monday, and they all felt exhilarated by it.

"I begin to think," said Harvey, "that Jack won't be a croaker just yet. I'll bet a new hat!"

"Which you want badly, Harvey, that I must say," interposed Mr. Mole.

"Ditto, the same to you, sir," said Harvey laughing; "not to make any unkind remarks about your continuations."

"What's the matter with my trousers? I hope nothing has gone amiss with them," exclaimed Mr. Mole, in alarm.

"There is only a hole as big as a besom, sir, in the rear."

"Dear me, what an unfortunate thing! Do my coat-tails cover it?"

"When the wind doesn't blow. As you're a householder since your marriage, sir, it doesn't matter, because you've got your 'rent' ready!" exclaimed Harvey.

"Ah! well. I suppose we shall have to resort to the garments of our first ancestors, which we have authority for believing were chiefly fig-leaves," replied Mr. Mole with a sigh.

"You interrupted my observation, sir," continued Harvey, "which was, that I'd make a bet Jack fogged the niggers somehow. He's clever."

"I hope sincerely he may. However, we will haste to the rescue. Monday!"

"Yes, Mist' Mole; what up now, sare?"

"See to my pistols, will you? And first take care that my rifle is not overloaded; I have a great horror of a gun that bursts."

"All right, sare! Monday, him see to that."

"You may leave it all to Mon," exclaimed Harvey.

"He'll put you straight, and send you out to the fight like a warrior of old, up to the knocker."

"I wish we had armour in these days. It would be a great protection," Mr. Mole observed, wistfully.

"A bold spirit is the only armour a brave man requires," replied Harvey.

"By the way, did your spear-wound hurt much?"

"Didn't it?" said Harvey. "I should think it did, just."

"What was it like?"

"Like? Oh! like having all your muscles pulled out one by one by machinery, and then having them put in again."

"Ah! war is a dreadful thing; nevertheless, I will

rescue our somewhat rash and foolhardy friend, Harkaway. You shall receive an example from me, Richard."

"Thank you, sir," replied Harvey, dryly.

When they reached the town they were sent for to the council.

The chiefs had decided upon an immediate attack.

After some discussion, it was found that the men could not be got ready, embarked, and disembarked on the island of Pisang for a few days.

There was much to be prepared, and it was not advisable to risk defeat by indulging in too much haste.

Even Harvey, impatient to be up and doing, and to strike a blow for his friend, was obliged to admit that.

Mr. Mole accompanied Harvey to his house, and a fresh bottle was produced, for, though the store of liquor was running short, Harvey carefully concealed and took care of what they had left.

In a short time Mr. Mole got what Harvey called "jolly," with his frequent attentions to the bottle, and was only prevented from singing a song by being reminded that Harkaway was in danger.

At length Harvey rose, and said—

"I won't say your room is better than your company, sir, but I must make myself scarce."

"Why break up our little party?" asked Mr. Mole.

"I don't like keeping a married man out, that's one reason; and another is, I have to drill an awkward squad of our soldiers before sunset."

"Ah, duty before all things. I will not detain you, Harvey."

"And, as I don't want my castle stormed, I think you'd better be stepping it, sir, or you'll have the rival beauties after you."

"Mist' Mole should use um stick," observed Monday.

"What's that, my valiant black?" asked Mr. Mole.

Monday brandished a stout bamboo, and replied—

"All Limbi men beat their wives. You beat Ambonia, sare, and then you see."

"Is it so? A good suggestion. I'll follow your advice, Monday, and apply the rod."

Mr. Mole took the stick which Monday offered him, and went away.

"I say, Monday, are you up to your larks with Mole?" asked Harvey, when he was gone.

"Yes. Monday have um lark with him," was the reply.

"Do the Limbians beat their wives?"

"No; only sometimes. Ambonia never beat in her life. Won't Mist' Mole catch it?" said Monday grinning.

"Hot and strong, I expect," replied Harvey who could not help laughing at the prospect which awaited the proprietor of a tea-garden in China.

When Mr. Mole reached his house, he found his wives sullenly awaiting him.

Alfura said nothing.

But Ambonia asked him where he had been, and why he stopped away from them.

Mole was just sufficiently tipsy to be valiant, and he replied—

"To see the execution, my dear. Fine thing an execution! Crocodiles fine; Nuratella fine."

"We went also, but we have been back some time," answered Ambonia. "You have been somewhere else."

"Only stayed to crack a bottle with a friend. English custom my dear."

"And what is that stick for?"

"For you, my pet," replied Mr. Mole.

Ambonia made a dash at him, and attempted to seize the stick.

Mr. Mole brought it down sharply over her naked and unprotected shoulders.

"Must be firm," he muttered. "Monday told me to be firm. I *will* be firm."

With a wild kind of howl, Ambonia sprang upon him, and grasping the stick broke it in two pieces.

"Playful creature!" exclaimed Mr. Mole, with an imbecile smile.

Ambonia seemed to be determined to let him know whether she was in play or not, for she began to beat him unmercifully with the biggest end of the bamboo which remained in her hand.

Mr. Mole fell on his knees before her, unable to withstand the torrent of blows.

"Ambonia," he said, "be merciful as you are strong; that stick hurts!"

"You have hit a princess of Limbi," she replied.

"It shall not occur again."

Thwack, thwack, descended the stick on his head and back.

"Behold me, Ambonia, on my knees," he said. "I repeat, behold me, for it is a sad sight! I am a great chief who has cut off heads in battle."

Ambonia danced before him in derision.

"And moreover," he added, "I am going to the wars with the Pisangs. You may never see me again."

This declaration altered the complexion of affairs.

Alfura's tender heart melted, and she endeavoured to calm Ambonia.

The Limbian women had a great respect for warriors.

When they were satisfied that their husband was going to fight, they lifted him up, put him on a seat, and sat round him.

"Ambonia will sing the white chief the deeds of her ancestors," she exclaimed.

"Yes, do ; that's sensible! By all means let us hear the song," said Mr. Mole, glad to escape so easily.

While Mrs. Mole No. 2 sang to him in a tone of voice, not altogether unpleasing, her husband pillowed his head in Alfura's lap and soon slept the sleep of the just.

CHAPTER XLIX.

MONDAY'S NEW CLOTHES.

THOUGH Harvey was gratified at the just punishment which Nuratella had received at the hands of the Tuan Biza, he was ill at ease.

In vain he tried to sleep.

The night was warm and sultry, but towards morning a heavy storm of rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning, occurred.

This lasted about an hour with all the violence peculiar to such tempests in the tropics.

After this, the wind rose and blew in fitful gusts.

Harvey thought he heard the sound of big guns being fired.

From the direction of the sound, he imagined that they came from the sea.

They were discharged at intervals of a minute.

Nothing is more exciting than to hear a ship in distress fire the minute gun at sea.

As soon as day broke, he went into an adjoining apartment and roused Monday.

The black was soon on his feet.

"What um up to, Mast' Harvey?" exclaimed Monday, as Harvey gave him a poke in the ribs to wake him.

"I want you to go down to the shore," replied Harvey.

"What for? Mast' Jack come back?"

"I wish to goodness, he had; no such luck. But I fancy some ship has been driven on the rocks. Guns have been firing."

"P'raps you dreaming, sare," said Monday.

"No; I haven't been dreaming either, so you're out there," replied Harvey, who had been like a wasp ever since Jack disappeared. "If I didn't go to sleep, I couldn't dream, could I?"

This argument was convincing.

"Monday be off like um shot," cried the black.

"Don't be long! If I am right," said Harvey, "we will take a boat and go to the wreck, before your countrymen can know anything about it. Some lives may be saved."

Fortunately Monday did not require much dressing, and was ready to start in less than no time.

An hour passed, during which Harvey paced the room impatiently.

He reproached himself with being inactive while Jack was in danger.

The Limbians were too slow in their movements to please him.

It appeared that, before they started for the invasion of Pisang, the priests had to go through certain forms and ceremonies, to bless the expedition.

During this delay, Jack might be killed by his enemies.

"I shouldn't care," thought Harvey, "if I could die with him."

It was a relief to his oppressed mind when Monday came back.

The black danced up and down in an extraordinary manner.

"Stop that hanky panky," said Harvey. "What are you cutting all these capers for, just for all the world like a bear on hot bricks?"

"Him one big ship, sare," said Monday; "not far from land, and him stuck on um rock."

"Is there a boat anywhere near?"

"One boat, the one we come from our island in, not far off."

"That will do. Just stay your dancing performance, and come with me. When a ship is wrecked, and people may be dead or dying, it is no time for larking," said Harvey.

"Monday him dance, because him think him get things."

"If you touch so much as a ship's biscuit without my permission, I'll skin you. Now then, lead the way; trot," replied Harvey.

Monday said no more, and they were quickly on the way to the shore.

The firing was over now, and the fate of the crew most likely decided.

With the utmost impatience Harvey hurried on, and getting into the boat, set the sail, steering directly for the wreck of a merchantman, which seemed to be fast lodged in between the rocks about half a mile or more from the beach.

As he cast his eyes back, he saw two dead bodies stretched out upon the sand, looking ghastly white in the reddening sun.

"I'm afraid we're too late, Monday. They're all dead as mutton, I expect," remarked Harvey.

"What's mutton, sare?" asked Monday.

"Sheep."

"If um sheep, why call him mutton?" asked Monday, puzzled.

"I can't explain now! I've something else to think of. You've no sheep in your forsaken country, but if you ever come to England with us, you'll know all about it."

Monday was silent for a while.

Then he said—

"Great, much wonderful place England, Mast' Harvey?"

"Rather! You'll say so, when you get there. But would you really like to come with us, if we get a passing ship to take us off?"

"Yes, Monday him come."

"And leave all your friends here?"

"Monday come back some time, and lay him bones in Limbi. Not like die out of his own country," he replied, thoughtfully.

They now reached the wreck, which was a China clipper of moderate tonnage.

The storm had done her fearful damage, and from her appearance she seemed to have been drifting water-logged for some days, so that she must have encountered more than one tempest, and have made bad weather before she was driven out of her track to Limbi.

Making the painter fast, Harvey sprang on board, followed by Monday.

Three corpses lay on the deck, and not a single living soul was to be seen above or below.

Perhaps the majority of the crew had taken to the boats before she struck and had been carried away in an opposite direction, for there were some obstinate currents in the seas.

"When Harvey satisfied himself that the crew were beyond his help, he went below and found that the cargo was chiefly tea and silk.

She was the "Johnny Sands" of London, and he could only deplore the fate of the brave fellows who had manned her.

"We may as well load our boat," said Harvey, "with such things as we want. Tea and coffee are luxuries we haven't had for a long time; powder and shot, if we can find any, will be useful, and a case of spirits will not be a bad present for Mole. Lend a hand, Monday, and let's overhaul the wreck."

Monday willingly complied, and in about an hour a couple of chests of tea, a case of spirits, some wine, a bag of coffee, a keg of powder and some shot, and various other little articles, none the worse for water, were handed on deck.

Harvey packed the boat as full as it would hold, and made free with some seamen's chests containing clothes, as his own were becoming rather ragged.

When all was ready for a start, he looked round for Monday, who was nowhere to be seen.

"Where's the beggar got to?" he muttered.

Going to the companion-ladder, he shouted—"Monday!"

"Coming, sare," replied Monday. "Give him um moment."

"I'll give you a hiding, if you keep me waiting," replied Harvey. "What are you doing below there? Is I catch you swigging——"

"Monday no swig, sare," replied a voice from the depths of the ship. "Him only rig himself up!"

"Do what?" said Harvey, in surprise.

"Him all right, Mast' Harvey; him right boot not fit. Never mind; one will do. Blow him right boot!"

"What on earth is he talking about?" thought Harvey.

Presently Monday made his appearance, and Harvey could not help laughing at the singular spectacle he presented.

He had seen his young master overhauling the seamen's chests, and the idea occurred to him that he ought to do the same thing.

"Mast' Harvey him dress; why not Monday? Him dress also," said Monday to himself.

He tried to put on a pair of white trousers, but tore them in the attempt, and got his left foot into a top boot, which he found in the captain's cabin.

The right one was wet, and wouldn't go on, so he managed to put one with side-springs on.

Upon his head he put a white hat with a black band round it, and this was perched a little on one side.

A white shirt was thrown over his shoulders, and tied round his neck by the sleeves.

Finding a paper collar, he had stuck that on with a pin, and tied a black ribbon round it.

"Monday, old man, this won't do," said Harvey, as soon as he could check his laughter at his ridiculous appearance; "you are a regular swell."

"Sare!" exclaimed the black, drawing himself up.

"You're going it," replied Harvey.

"Monday go to England. When him go him dress. Why not Monday dress now?"

"I don't see any particular reason. You're all thick cheese; 'quite up to the knocker,' as we say."

At this compliment Monday grinned as if he was intensely gratified.

"Monday him what you call um swell," he said, regarding his only boot with complacency.

"I should think you were a swell," replied Harvey. "Niggers can do it."

"Why you call me nigger, Mast' Harvey?"

"Because you are not white, and you're rather more greasy than you might be, only that's your misfortune and not your fault. You'd do well to sit over the wheel of an engine; it wouldn't want much train oil."

"Have him dress right?" asked Monday, not understanding Harvey's chaff.

"Slap up!"

"Monday, him feel rather funny."

At this Harvey burst out laughing again.

"You're all right," he said, "don't flurry your fat. You might as well have started two boots while you were about it."

"Him cuss boot not go on," said Monday, in a tone of vexation.

"Don't swear, Monday. Where did you learn that?"

"Mist' Mole, him swar when Ambonia go on at him. He say, 'cuss the women.'"

"Does he? That's very wrong of him," replied Harvey; "and don't you follow a bad example. Jump into the boat; never mind the other boot. You'll do. You're up to the nines, and would make a sensation in Hyde Park."

"Monday, good Englishmans."

"Stunning. I never saw a better," answered Harvey, wishing to gratify his harmless vanity.

"That all right," said Monday, smiling from ear to ear.

"I'll have you presented at court some day. It would read well in the papers. His royal highness Prince Matabella Monday of Limbi, present on the happy occasion of his finding a top boot and white hat, both rather the worse for wear."

Monday did not understand all this.

"But," he said, "now, Mast' Harvey, you chaff poor Monday."

"Chaff? I'm not chaffing. Ain't you a prince? And haven't you found a top boot and a white hat?"

"Yes, that all right."

"Dry up then, and steer the boat while I look after the sail."

They embarked with their cargo, Harvey congratulating himself upon being first in the field.

Had the natives discovered the wreck first, they would soon have carried away everything that was worth having.

As Harvey looked at Monday the more absurd his appearance seemed.

"Why you laugh, Mast' Harvey?" asked Monday.

"Because I can't help myself, and shall burst if I don't," replied Dick.

"Anything wrong with Monday?"

"I've told you there isn't; you're a toff?"

"Why um laugh then? Monday think him better dress than you, sare. Him got no tear in him——"

But not knowing the name for shirt, or forgetting it in his excitement, he pointed to his covering.

"Oh! Your shirt's fine," replied Harvey.

"No holes in him?"

"I know mine is more holy than righteous; never mind, Monday, I've got something in those chests, and I'll cut you out. You shan't take the shine out of me like this."

Monday laughed, and was evidently much pleased with himself.

"Him Englishmans now," he said.

"You've done the trick, Monday," answered Harvey; "they'll take you for the British consul at least, if we get to Singapore."

They ran their boat into a sheltered nook, and left the contents within it, intending to send down for them when they reached Tompano.

At a short distance from the city they saw a female sitting under a tree.

In her hand she held a bottle of spirits, which Harvey recognised as one he had given Mr. Mole.

She had twined some flowers in her hair, which hung down her back in untidy masses.

"Look, sare!" said Monday, "that Missy Mole."

"So it is. What is she doing, I wonder?" replied Harvey.

Monday put his hand to his mouth, as if to signify that she had been drinking.

Her wild appearance seemed to bear out the truth of his suggestion.

"If she has been imitating her husband we'd better give her a wide berth," Harvey said.

Mrs. Mole Number Two, however, was too quick for them.

Jumping up, she ran with unsteady steps to Harvey and seized his arm.

"You make my husband drink," she exclaimed.

"When he comes to you, he goes home and beat me."

"My dear lady," replied Harvey, "I assure you I do all I can to stop him."

"No, no!" cried Ambonia, raising her voice to a high pitch; "you send him to me with a bamboo and then he beat me."

"I'll swear I didn't."

"To-day," she continued, "I have taken away his spirit, and I have tasted it."

"Is it good?"

Ambonia raised the bottle to her lips and took a deep draught.

"It goes like fire through the blood," she answered; "but it has not taken away my senses. You are my husband's enemy, and thus will I punish you."

As she spoke she aimed a blow at him with the bottle.

He jumped on one side, and narrowly escaped having his head broken.

"I say!" exclaimed Harvey, "stash it. Here, Monday, speak to your amiable countrywoman. This won't do at all."

Ambonia danced round Harvey, and made a snatch at his hair.

She grasped it, and tugged away at it till Harvey danced too.

"Pull her off, Monday!" he exclaimed. "Look sharp, or I shan't have a hair left."

"Monday come, sare."

Monday seized Ambonia by the waist and dragged her to the ground.

Harvey fell with her.

She loosened her grip, and turned her attention to Monday, whom she abused in fine style.

Harvey soon tied Ambonia's hands behind her.

She kicked and screamed, but was unable to help herself.

"I'll be revenged," she cried with a hysterical sob.

"I'll kill him."

"What we do with her?" asked Monday.

"I'll be hanged if I know."

"I s'pose we carry her home, sare."

"She's heavy," said Harvey.

"Never mind, sare. I take her head, you take her legs; we carry her like that."

If they had not decided to do this, it is doubtful whether Ambonia would have got home.

The whisky she had been taking had got into her head, and she staggered about in a ludicrous manner.

First she ran to Monday, and tried to bite him; then she ran towards Harvey, and tried to kick him, then lost her balance, and fell gracefully on her back.

"Now's your time, Monday; lay hold!" exclaimed Harvey.

"Me got her, sare," replied Monday.

"Lay still, mum. It's all right," continued Harvey; "we don't wish to hurt you."

She was a good weight, and it was lucky they had not far to go. It was a ludicrous procession.

Ambonia screeching, struggling, and making horrible faces.

Monday fantastically dressed, and grinning like a baboon.

Harvey enjoying the fun, but rather wishing he was out of it.

At length they got her home, and gave her into the charge of Alfura.

Then they made their way to their own home, to which Mr. Mole had previously gone.

The news of the wreck had spread.

Mr. Mole had heard of the wreck, and was looking for Harvey, to know if he would go with him to the stranded vessel.

The Tuan Biza, and many chiefs, had already started.

A wreck was a great event in those islands, and everyone, from the highest to the lowest, strove to get as much plunder as he could.

Suddenly Harvey and Monday met Mr. Mole.

"Hullo, sir!" cried Harvey. "Where are you pelting off to?"

"There is a wreck, Harvey," answered Mr. Mole; "and I am going to see what good I can do for the poor creatures. Won't you come?"

"We've been there, sir."

"Been there!" said Mr. Mole, stopping and drawing his breath quickly. "Are there not some casks of spirit on board?"

"We got a few, sir. You'd better make haste, or you'll be too late for your share."

"I'll stick up for my rights. Share and share alike is English, or at least, Yorkshire. I'll have my rights, or my name is not Isaac Mole; but who in the name of wonder, is this strange-looking animal? Is he some one saved from the wreck?"

He pointed to Monday as he spoke whom he did not recognise in his strange attire.

"That's the King of the Cannibal Islands," replied Harvey.

"Indeed!"

"Yes; he's eaten more men, considering his size and weight than any other of his nation in existence."

"What a dreadful creature?"

"Dance, you uncultivated beast!" cried Harvey. "Show the gentleman what you can do."

And he began to sing—

"Hoky poky, wanky fum,
How do you like your taters done?
The King of the Cannibal Islands."

Monday stood still and obstinately refused to move.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Mole, "he looks, to my imagination, like a wandering Christy minstrel out of work. Fancy his being an anthropophagos, or man-eater, as we should say at school."

"Don't irritate him by looking at him in that way, sir; he might do you an injury," said Harvey. "He's subject to fits."

"Fits! Bless me! Keep him off. I wonder at your fondness for such savage pets, Harvey. There is that wretched Monday, now——"

Monday showed his teeth.

He advanced to Mr. Mole with an angry look, fully entering into Harvey's joke.

"Keep him off, Harvey," cried Mr. Mole in an agony of apprehension; "I don't want to hurt him."

"Prop him, sir!" said Harvey, delighted. "Don't funk him; prop him in the eye! Give him a domino! I'll see fair play!"

"Perhaps he bites!" exclaimed Mr. Mole, drawing back.

Again Monday showed his teeth in a vicious manner.

Mr. Mole got behind Harvey saying—

"Protect me, Harvey. It is hard to be stopped in this way when I am hastening to the wreck to do Christian work."

"You needn't hurry, sir; the poor fellows are beyond human aid."

"Say you so? Then their belongings are lawful spoil, and that confounded Tuan Biza will——"

"Collar the lot, eh, sir?"

"Just so, Harvey; but I entreat you to protect me from that truculent-looking savage."

Harvey glided away, and Monday approached Mr. Mole threateningly.

Mole fell on knees, and lifting up his hands, said—

"Good, kind Mr. Cannibal, don't do anything desperate. I'm only a poor schoolmaster. Don't eat me!"

"He'll only take a mouthful; he's not hungry," exclaimed Harvey, who was exploding with laughter.

Mr. Mole's distress was ludicrous in the extreme.

CHAPTER L

HARVEY'S RESOLVE.

SUDDENLY a gust of wind blew off Monday's white hat, which disconcerted him greatly.

"You've lost your tile," cried Harvey.

"Monday, him soon catch um tile," exclaimed the black, forgetting his assumed part of the King of the Canniba' Islands.

Mr. Mole's eyes were opened.

As soon as he saw Monday without his hat, he recognised him, and rising to his feet, said—

"Why, what sort of a trick is this, Harvey? Such deception is shameful. The poor creature is Monday."

"I could have told you that, sir," replied Harvey.

"Come here, you black thief," continued Mr. Mole, as Monday approached, having captured his runaway hat. "I'll thrash you within an inch of your life. What do you mean by rigging yourself out like that, and making fun of me?"

"Monday king; him eat um up, sare," answered Monday, who, however, kept at a respectful distance.

"I'll attend to you afterwards, my jocose friend; at present I am engaged. I shall be late at the wreck."

"There is no occasion to go, sir," said Harvey. "I have secured all that is worth having. She is only a merchantman, laden with tea chiefly, and if you want a cask or two of rum or Hollands, you are welcome to them."

Mr. Mole shook him cordially by the hand.

"My dear Harvey," he replied; "my greatest consolation in this, my exile, is that I have a friend like you so near me. Your words go straight to my heart. Where are the casks?"

"In our boat, sir."

"Is it safe? Will not the Limbian thieves deprive us of our lawful spoil?"

"They've got to find it first."

"Their noses are keen, and their scent sure. I wouldn't trust the descendants of Ham."

"Gammon!" replied Harvey, by way of a joke. "The Tuan Biza would notice anything his people took. First come, first served, that's the law here, and I will say this for them, if their laws are few, they respect what they have got."

"With that assurance I will rest contented. I have over-exerted myself already in the morning sun, for no sooner did I hear the news, than I hastened away—not for what I could get, Harvey, but to do good! Don't think for a moment I went for what I could get."

"Not you, sir. You'd put whisky in a bottle, and throw stones at it."

"Well, I don't know that, exactly," replied Mr. Mole; "but I would not make capital out of the misfortunes of my fellow-creatures."

"Monday," cried Harvey, "cut on to the little village, and get some fellows to bring the stores out of the boat to our house; and look sharp, or I pity you."

"All right, Mast' Harvey," said Monday, adding, "no eat Mr. Mole this time."

"You impudent black slave, begone; or I shall lose my temper, and be tempted to play the part of Moses in Egypt," answered Mr. Mole.

"What that, sare?"

"What that, sir? Why this, sir," Mr. Mole answered, bringing a bamboo he carried in his hand with some force down upon Monday's posteriors.

Monday uttered a yell, and put his hands behind him, as if to conceal the injured part, and then he started off at a run.

"Must be firm with those fellows, Harvey," said Mr. Mole, complacently. "Give them an inch, they'll take an ell. No foolishness. You see that I have tamed that savage, who, by the way, wouldn't be half so cheeky if you didn't encourage him."

"His hide's tough enough, sir. You didn't hurt him."

"Never mind. I did not wish to inflict any brutalising punishment. All I wanted was to assert my authority; that done, I am satisfied."

"Walk back with me, sir, will you? I want to have a talk with you," said Harvey.

"Certainly, my boy."

Side by side they retraced their steps towards Tompano.

"You see, sir," began Harvey "I'm what the sailors call flummoxed."

"And what may that be?"

"Knocked out of time, upset, worried, bothered. I didn't sleep a wink all last night."

"Why is that?" demanded Mr. Mole.

"Because I am so anxious on Jack's account. If I was with him, and could share his danger, I shouldn't care half so much."

"I too am deeply grieved at Harkaway's disappear-

ance, but I make bold to hope that no harm has befallen him," replied Mr. Mole, gravely.

"He's in Hunston's power."

"Well! So much the better!"

"So much the worse you mean, sir. He'd have ten times more chance, if he had to deal with the natives only," answered Harvey.

"I know Hunston to be bad and vindictive. He has little or no feeling. See how he kicked me, Isaac Mole, the proprietor of a tea-garden in China."

"And also proprietor of two wives in Limbi."

"Don't, Harvey. If you love me, don't joke on that subject. It is a sore one," said Mr. Mole with a groan.

"Very well, sir; I won't," replied Harvey. "Something ought to be done to help Jack at once."

"Are we not going in force to rescue him?"

"We are; but by the time we get to Pisang we may only find his dead body."

"Nonsense, Harvey; I cannot believe that Hunston would be such an abandoned wretch as to murder an old schoolfellow in cold blood."

"Wouldn't he? I know the beast better than you do," said Harvey. "That is just why I am funking."

"The Tuan Biza will be ready to sail in two days from this time."

"Not now."

"Why not now?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Because there is a lot of drink on board the wreck, and the Limbians are not above temptation. They'll be on the spree till it's all gone?"

"Do you think so?"

"I'm sure of it. Savages are awful beggars to lush, when they get the chance, and the chiefs will be as drunk as flies for a week. I can see that."

"Perhaps you are right," replied Mr. Mole, moodily.

"They respect us, and they like us," continued Harvey; "the prompt way in which they put Nuratella out of the way is a proof that they want to conciliate us; but, after all, Jack is not one of them, and it does not much matter to them whether he lives or dies."

"Your reasoning is cogent, very cogent. What then do you propose to do?"

"This. I am determined to strike a blow for Jack at once, even if I lose my own life in the attempt."

"I commend your pluck, Harvey. Shall I accompany you? Harkaway is a dear fellow, and I will cast in my lot with you, even to the death, as you say," exclaimed Mr. Mole, animated with sudden and unusual valour.

"No; that won't do!" replied Harvey.

"You won't have me?" said Mr. Mole, secretly rejoiced; "and why not? Am I not worthy to fight in a good cause?"

"I want you to stay here, sir!" answered Harvey.

"You shall do your share of fighting when the time comes, but the Limbians want some one to keep them bang up to the mark."

"Ah! I perceive."

"They have been badly beaten once or twice lately by the Pisangs, and they don't like attacking them without a white leader."

"Quite so."

"It may be a month," Harvey continued, "before they would invade Pisang of their own accord."

"Very possible."

"You are accounted a great chief," Harvey went on, "and have influence amongst them. They respect you, sir."

"And do I not deserve it, Harvey? Have I not always borne myself bravely when there was any fighting to be done?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Certainly, sir. You're a second Agamemnon. You can do it when you like; and I want you to stop here and organise the forces."

"That is just within the scope of my administrative ability. You could not have given me a more congenial task."

"See that they take proper supplies, keep their powder dry, and that every five-and-twenty men have their proper officers."

"And you?"

"I shall leave Limbi, with Monday, in a couple of hours."

"How?"

"In our boat?" replied Harvey. "I can't stop here. Pisang is only a few hours' sail, and I may be of some use to dear old Jack."

"The odds are against you."

"Have they not always been against the man who has attempted a daring enterprise, sir?" asked Harvey.

"That is true. History abounds with instances of successful daring."

"Pat me on the back, sir, and tell me to go in and win," said Harvey.

"Of course I will. But here we are at your house. Let us have a glass—a parting glass, to drink success to your expedition!" exclaimed Mr. Mole.

"You are welcome to what you like, sir. As for me, I shall not touch a drop. I never drink when I have anything to do, and keep my head cool. A glass or two when you're ashore and on the spree is another thing," answered Harvey.

"As you please, my boy. My blood is colder than yours, and wants warming. I'll drink your share and my own too," said Mr. Mole.

Harvey placed a bottle before him, and said—

"Polish it off, sir; there's more where that came from. It's a pure spirit."

"So it is, Harvey, and there isn't a headache in a gallon of pure spirit," replied Mr. Mole, who soon made himself at home.

Harvey went away to look for Monday, and apprise him of the determination he had come to.

He knew that the faithful fellow would follow him to the end of the world if he asked him, and he was also sure that he could not propose any expedition to him which he would like so well as one to rescue Jack.

Monday loved Jack with all his heart.

It would have comforted Jack in his captivity, if he had known how wildly two true hearts were beating on his account.

CHAPTER LI.

AT HUNSTON'S MERCY.

For some time after he was knocked down, Jack did not recover his senses, and when he did, an acute pain at the back of the head informed him that he had received a severe blow.

Gradually the fresh sea air revived him, and the dizziness consequent on his hurt passed away.

The ripple of the waves against the sides of the boat, and the swarthy faces of the Pisangs, visible by the pale moonlight, sufficed to tell him that he was being carried into captivity.

He was furious at the thought of it.

Up to the present time he had been singularly successful in defeating Hunston's designs.

To be in his power and at his mercy, was a reflection akin to madness.

However, Jack liked danger.

At school he always said that the fun of being in a scrape was the getting out of it.

"As long as they don't knock me on the head entirely, I don't care," he said to himself.

Thinking that when the landing was effected, he would be taken to some prison, he determined to give them as much trouble as possible.

If he pretended to be worse than he really was, and did not appear able to walk, they would have to carry him.

It was as he expected.

When they reached the coast of Pisang, he was lifted out of the boat, and placed upon a couple of planks tied together with reeds, and carried by four men.

The town called Palembang was reached before day-break, and Jack found himself deposited in a square-built bamboo house, thatched with palm leaves.

It was strongly built, and no doubt guarded outside.

As soon as he was left to himself, Jack took the bearings of his prison.

He tied his bandana handkerchief round his head to keep the air and the flies from his wound.

"I don't feel much the worse," he said. "Wonder what they're going to do with me."

He could see through chinks in the wall that daylight had appeared.

"We used to sing," he remarked, "'I shan't go home till morning.' It doesn't look like going home at all. Suppose we have a look round."

Getting into a corner, he climbed up the bamboos till he reached the roof of his prison, which was made of sticks, covered with palm leaves.

It did not take him more than five minutes to push a hole through these big enough to get his body through.

Then he climbed on to the roof, and, sitting down, took a survey of the city.

There were few people about, though numbers of houses stretched away in all directions.

At the door of the house, if the one-storied bamboo hut was worthy of the designation, paced two sentries, armed with spears, and bows and arrows.

"It's no good trying to escape," thought Jack. "Not just yet at least. I should be seen and there would be a hue and cry. Don't see why I shouldn't have a game though with one of those niggers."

Some pieces of rock were laid over a weak part of the thatch, to prevent the wind blowing it away.

Taking up a little bit, he threw it at the head of a drowsy-looking Pisang.

"Morning, old fellow. It's nice and airy up here," he exclaimed.

The soldier rubbed his eyes with astonishment when he saw Jack.

"Go down again," he said.

"I'm in no hurry, thank you," replied Jack.

"You're a prisoner, and it's against the rules."

"Is it? Blow me, I shouldn't have thought it. What time do you breakfast in these parts?"

"You will have something when the other guard comes; but go down. You've no business up there," said the soldier, who wondered at Jack's speaking his language so well.

"Come and fetch me!"

"I'll call the white Tuan Biza," threatened the guard.

"Call him a thundering scoundrel, and you won't be far out," answered Jack.

Giving some orders in a low tone to his fellow-soldier, the Pisang went to a house at a little distance, and presently returned with Hunston.

The latter looked very sleepy and very cross; his face, however, was not now disfigured by a single tattoo mark.

The stain was not lasting.

It had faded away.

"Come down off there!" exclaimed Hunston savagely.

"Shan't!" Jack replied coolly.

"Won't you, by George? Then I shall have to make you."

"Try it on, old son; you're welcome."

"Give me that spear," exclaimed Hunston to the soldier.

He took it and cast it at Jack, who bobbed on one side, and very cleverly caught it in his hand, as it was whizzing by over the thatch.

"That's one to me," he exclaimed. "Now, look here, if you try to knock me off my perch, I'll give you one for yourself, Mister Hunston."

The latter looked amazed at this cool effrontery.

"Don't you know you're a prisoner?" he replied.

"What of that? It may be your turn soon. By the way, I'm glad to see that ugly mug of yours has improved a little since we last had the pleasure of meeting."

Hunston stifled a curse.

"You shall have an ornamental phiz before I've done with you, and one you'll never get rid of," he said.

"How's that?" asked Jack, unconcernedly.

"Because you'll carry it down to the grave with you in a brace of shakes."

"Thank you; much obliged, I'm sure," replied Jack.

"How's your mother?"

"Come down off there," thundered Hunston.

"Not if I know it. I shall stay here until breakfast's ready, and then I'll descend. Pray give me something nice; I'm rather hungry."

Hunston foamed at the mouth with rage.

"Fine city this!" cried Jack, surveying the town with a critical air. "But not a patch on Tompano. Pity we shall have to burn it about your ears."

"We?" repeated Hunston. "I don't think you'll have much to do with it."

"Don't you? Well, it's only a difference of opinion, and yours isn't worth much. I say, how's the Tuan Biza?"

"He's right enough. Come down!"

"Not by any manner of means. Can't afford it. Can't be done at the price. Lovely prospect. How's Keyali?"

"You know deuced well he's wiped out. We found his body stuck through and through with knives."

"His own fault. He was a plucky fellow, but, like you, a little too headstrong," said Jack.

"Will you come down?" shouted Hunston, who was beside himself with rage.

"Not much; unless you behave like a gentleman, and take my parol."

"What's that?"

"There," said Jack, in a tone of mock compassion, "you see the necessity for learning when one's young. I always thought your education was neglected. You should have made better use of your time. *Didicisse artes*—I forget the rest, but I will ask Mole for your edification; I'll make a note of it."

He took out his pocket-book, and coolly wrote, reading as he put it down—

"Mem. Ask Mole as to quotation—something—*artes*—to coach up Hunston."

"However," he continued, putting away his book, "I'll explain parol. It means that I will give you my word of honour not to hook it if you will let me walk about the city."

"You haven't got such a thing as honour."

"Don't judge others by yourself, old boy. Never mind; it don't much matter, I'm very jolly where I am. Best part of the day, morning. Nice cool air—breeze—not much sun."

Jack played with the captured spear.

"Fool!" hissed Hunston, through his teeth. "Don't you know you're at my mercy."

"No, I wasn't aware of the fact," replied Jack, innocently.

Hunston gave the guard some additional orders, and stalked away to his house, unable to contain himself any longer.

CHAPTER LII.

TRUE TO HIS COLOURS.

HAVING succeeded in annoying Hunston, which was all he wanted to do, Jack crept through the hole and sat down on the floor of his prison.

Presently the guard was changed, and something to eat and drink was brought him.

"Only a loaf of bread and some water!" he muttered. "Well, that's better than nothing; and there is one comfort in it—they don't mean to eat me, or they'd fatten me up a bit first."

A few hours glided by, and he began to feel very miserable.

Suddenly the door opened, and Emily came in.

"This is a gleam of sunshine," he exclaimed. "Emily, you are as welcome as the flowers in May."

"Oh, Jack," she replied tearfully, "can you ever forgive me for getting you into this trouble?"

"It was my fault. I ought to have been more wide-awake. Why, I haven't thought about it since last night."

"But they will kill you!" she answered.

"Will they? When?"

"To-morrow morning. It's all settled. A council has been held."

"How are they going to do it?" asked Jack, feeling curious as to the mode to be adopted in putting him out of the world.

"You are to be hanged at daybreak. I can hardly find courage to utter the dreadful words," said Emily with a shudder.

Jack put his head on one side, and let his tongue hang out of his mouth, as a pantomimic way of describing the tragedy.

"Oh, don't joke, Jack dear," she replied. "It's too horrible; and to think it is all my fault!"

"All through my love for you, eh, Emmy? Never mind, darling; they won't find me show the white feather," Jack exclaimed firmly.

"I don't think there is much chance," she said.

"Is there any?" he inquired, regarding her earnestly.

"Ye—es."

"What is it?"

"Hunston says he will spare you, if I—I will marry him," replied the girl, blushing.

"Hang his impudence, Emmy," answered Jack, indignantly. "You marry a sweep like him. Don't you do it. I won't accept my life on those terms. I thought you cared for me."

"So I do, dear Jack. I love you, very, very much indeed!"

She threw herself on his breast, and wept bitterly.

"I have no one to think of but you now, since father died," she went on.

"Is Mr. Scratchley dead?"

"Yes; he died yesterday, while I was taken to Limbi; all through Hunston's violence. He struck him, and he never got over it."

"Did he? That's another chalk to Hunston," said Jack savagely.

"I didn't expect to meet you in these islands, and when I heard you were also wrecked, I thought what a pleasant meeting we should have, but how bitterly I have been deceived."

"I knew you were here, Emmy," said Jack.

"How did you find it out?" she asked, checking her tears and looking up.

He told her about the message from the sea.

"How wonderfully things happen," she exclaimed.

"Poor papa got very needy after you left us, and he resolved to emigrate. Fancy our meeting here so many miles away from home!"

"I came over to Limbi principally to rescue you," continued Jack, "for I heard that a white girl was saved from the wreck and a prisoner among the Pisangs. After reading the message, you know, I guessed it was you."

"How can I thank you? But look here, Jack dear. I have brought you a sharp Malay knife, which I stole from the Tuan Biza's house, where I live."

"Thank you. What shall I do with it—cut my throat and disappoint the Pisangs?" he said, concealing the weapon in his waistcoat.

She smiled sadly, for she knew he was not in earnest.

"You are still the same old Jack," she replied, "fearless in the midst of danger, and ready at all times to laugh at death."

"Why shouldn't I? Being miserable won't mend matters! Shall I sit down and cry? But tell me, how did you get leave to come and visit me?"

"I begged permission from Hunston, and he wouldn't give it me until—until——"

"Well?"

"I let him have a kiss. I didn't mean to, Jack. It

was only a little one after all ; don't be jealous ! " she said bashfully.

Jack set his teeth together.

"That's another chalk to Hunston. I'll have it out of him," he exclaimed.

"It felt like the touch of a snake, Jack dear," she went on.

"So I should think. The brute, to think that he had a kiss, when I haven't dared to ask for one. May I though, Emmy, may I ? "

"You know you may, Jack—a dozen if you like."

And Jack did like.

He construed this into permission to help himself, and he covered her pretty face with kisses.

"There, Jack," she said, pushing him away ; "that will do. Don't be stupid."

"That's a nice thing to say to a fellow, who's got to dance upon nothing to-morrow morning," he rejoined.

"Oh ! there's another thing, Jack," exclaimed Emily, "I forgot to tell you. Hunston is coming here to examine you presently."

"Is he ? What about ? "

"The plan of the Limbian attack, which they expect soon. The number of men and fire-arms ; and if you tell them, they will promise you your life, though they don't intend to keep their word any the more for that."

"I shouldn't suppose they would. They're all thieves and liars. Don't they wish they may get it. I shan't split on my party, so they wouldn't have got a word out of me, even if you hadn't told me."

"Spoken like yourself, Jack. Be true to your colour. I shouldn't like you if you weren't," replied Emily.

"I've got one comfort," continued Jack, "and that is, you will be all safe."

"How ? "

"We're sure to lick them, at least Harvey is ; he will fight like a Turk for me, and you will be rescued."

"Harvey, who was at school with you at Crawcour's ? Is he at Limbi ? "

"Rather. Alive and kicking too, and as good a friend, and as fine a fellow as ever lived," replied Jack.

"But without you—oh ! Jack—without you, how could

"I—how can I live?" sobbed Emily, her fears overcoming her again.

"Don't worry, Emmy dear!" he replied, kissing away her tears. "The beggars haven't done it yet; they've got to do the trick."

"Can you help yourself?"

"I think so. There is plenty of time between this and to-morrow morning."

"To do what?"

"To cut my stick. If I'm not mistaken, they'll find the cage door open and the bird gone," he said.

"Have you got any plan?" she asked.

"Not yet. I've got to think it over; ideas generally come when I want them. I'm not going to stop here, to be strung up like a dog, that's flat."

"You put new life into me, Jack," replied Emily joyfully. "Oh! if you only could escape."

"Wouldn't it be a lark," Jack went on. "Hunston would have a fit, and he wouldn't be able to sleep, night or day, for thinking of the reckoning he'd have to pay me."

A head was put in at the door.

"Time's up," cried the voice of Hunston.

"Good-bye, Emily," exclaimed Jack, pressing her hand, and giving her a wink which was intended to reassure her, and make her believe that he was quite prepared for anything that might happen.

She returned his farewell, and stepped, with as much bravery as she could summon to her aid, into the open air.

The door closed again.

But Jack was not alone.

Hunston stood leaning against a post, with his arms folded, and regarding Jack with an air of gratified malignity.

CHAPTER LIII.

KEPT IN SUSPENSE.

"I SUPPOSE you have come to crow over me," exclaimed Jack, annoyed at his visitor's sullen silence. "Go on; I can stand it."

"It won't be for long," replied Hunston. "We are going to settle old scores, Harkaway."

"If you'd any generosity, you'd forget and forgive," answered Jack.

"It is not my nature to do either one or the other. You've made me suffer and you shall die to-morrow morning. I'd hang you to-day in sight of all the people, only I want you to think over what I'm going to tell you."

"What's that?"

"You love Emily. Don't deny it. I remember at school that she was your playfellow, and you grew up together."

"I don't mean to deny it," replied Jack.

"It wouldn't help you if you did, for I shouldn't believe you. Well, chance has thrown you both into my power. You shall die, and when you're dead, I will make Emily my wife."

Jack made no reply.

"Do you hear me? My wife!" continued Hunston. "Think of that!"

The shaft went home.

In the imperfect light which reigned in the bamboo-house, Hunston could see his former companion writhe and bite his lips till he quivered with the pain.

"She shall see your body blackening in the sun, and the birds of prey picking your flesh from the bones."

"You're a cowardly bully, to come and exult over me like this," replied Jack, forgetting his assumed indifference.

"It's a part of my revenge. I knew it would come some day. I've worked and waited for it."

"I was a fool," said Jack, "not to have shot you when I had the chance."

"Perhaps you were. However, you've lost the opportunity, and you're not likely to have another," replied Hunston.

"You might think of one thing," replied Jack, "and that is, I saved you from the Pisangs when you were bound to the stake."

Hunston smiled sardonically.

"You wouldn't have done it if you could have foreseen this day," he said.

"Yes, I would," answered Jack. "I would, upon my word. I could not see a former friend in distress, and not help him. But it's no use talking to you. One might as well speak to a stone of mercy."

"I don't know the word. Still I might be induced to spare your life," remarked Hunston, carelessly.

"On what terms?"

"Tell me the plan of the Limbian attack, for our spies have informed us that you mean to invade Pisang in force."

"You got that from Nuratella."

"Never mind where the intelligence came from. We can rely upon it."

Jack thought of what Emily had told him.

"Nothing would induce me to betray my friends and allies," he exclaimed.

"Nothing? Think a moment. Life is sweet."

"Not on such terms," answered Jack, resisting the voice of the tempter.

"Die, then! Die like a dog, as you deserve!" said Hunston, in a rage; "and think over all I have said to you."

"Get out!" cried Jack, "or, prisoner as I am, I'll punch your head."

Hunston stepped back.

"Touch me!" he exclaimed. "If you dare lay so much as your little finger on me, I will have you seized, and your flesh torn off with jagged stones made red-hot."

"Coward!" was all Jack ventured to reply.

"I go," continued Hunston, "but you will see me at your side to-morrow morning when you are executed, and I hope my presence will add one more drop to your cup of misery."

"Thank you," replied Jack; "I am not afraid to die, and the prospect isn't half so bad as being obliged to be shut up here with such a beast as you."

Saying "to-morrow," Hunston left him alone, and Jack brightened up a bit.

"I can breathe now that serpent is gone," Jack said to himself. "What a relief. He's worse than a snake to me."

The day passed and they brought him neither provisions or water.

His fate being decided upon, they did not seem to take

any further notice of him, knowing that he was well guarded.

"I'll take a squint round, and see what's going on," thought Jack.

He climbed up the wall, as he had done before, and got on the roof.

In an open space before Hunston's house some men were busily at work with poles.

They were making a huge gallows.

"That's for me," said Jack.

And then he thought what a triumph it would be if he could only get away, join his friends, capture Palembang, and hang Hunston on his own gallows.

Presently he saw the Tuan Biza going by.

"Hi!" he cried. "Tuan Biza, hi!"

The chief looked up in astonishment.

"It's all right," cried Jack. "Hunston said I might take the air; but I'm very thirsty. Chuck us up a cocoanut or something."

Apparently satisfied that Hunston had given him permission to get on the roof, and there was nothing wrong, the Tuan Biza gave orders that he should be supplied with what he wanted.

"They will bring you something presently," he said.

"And some grub. What do you call it in your lingo? 'Prindu;' that's it. Send me a small parrot, or a bit of pork, cold. I see you've got some likely pigs running about loose," continued Jack.

The Tuan Biza nodded, and passed on.

When Jack saw some Pisangs coming with refreshments, he descended again, and began to attack the viands with a good appetite.

"That's something like," he muttered. "I wanted food. It will set me up for the work I've got to do to-night."

His face assumed a determined expression.

Throwing himself on the ground in a corner, he closed his eyes.

But he did not sleep.

His brain was at work, and he was thinking how he could outwit his enemies.

The gallows he had seen had an ugly look, and the thought of it quickened his perceptions wonderfully.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY.

HARVEY had not long to wait for his trusty followers.

He came toiling along, with about a dozen other Limbians, heavily laden with the spoil of the wreck.

They brought the packages and cases into the house, and laid them down.

"Excellent," said Mr. Mole, rubbing his hands. "You are a capital caterer, Harvey. Truly my heart rejoices within me at the sight of all these good things."

"Help yourself, sir! You can unpack them when we are gone," replied Harvey.

"I will not fail to do so."

"There is one thing I should like you to do, sir."

"You have but to name it, my young friend."

"There are several bodies of Englishmen, some washed ashore and others on the wreck."

"Yes!"

"Have them brought on shore, and see them decently buried, will you?"

"Certainly, Harvey; a most proper request. I will see the last obsequies paid to my unfortunate countrymen. Their bodies shall be brought up to-night and interred to-morrow," replied Mr. Mole.

"Now, Monday, look alive!" continued Harvey.

"What um Monday do now, sare?" asked the black.

"First of all, take off those togs."

"Take off um beautiful dress? No, sare, not if him die for it!" replied Monday in alarm.

"But you must! You can keep them for Sunday; that hat will make a splendid Sunday-going beaver. You and I start soon."

"Start for where, Mast' Harvey?"

"To go after Jack. He is in the hands of the Pisangs, and we must see what we can do for him. If you wear those things, you won't have freedom of action on the war-path!"

"Go after Mast' Jack?" cried Monday, delightedly.

"That 'nother thing, sare ; Monday undress, and get um ready."

"I knew you would. I'd have sworn you'd go like a bird, after Jack."

"Like one, two, three, bird, sare. Go anywhere, and do anything for you and Master Jack?" said the savage, who, under his dusky skin, had as good a heart as ever beat beneath a white one.

"Get the boat ready at once ; put in any dried stuff you can lay your claws on, and bread, with some fresh water, enough, say, to last us a fortnight."

"All right, sare," replied Monday, running off.

Mr. Mole was overhauling what he called the "salvage."

"Glorious salvage, Harvey," he said, opening a case of Hollands. "The Dutchmen know what is good ; this is vertible schnaps. I feel I want taking up a peg or two. We must sample this, Harvey."

"Peg away, sir. It's all your own," replied Dick.

"Very good ; I will proceed to do so. Splendid fellows those Dutchmen ! They manage to put a true taste of smoke into their whisky, which is what I like. I will drink to the independence of Holland."

Mr. Mole did so, and found the liquor so good that he repeated the experiment.

Harvey busied himself in making up a few packages, and was favoured with Mr. Mole's critical approval.

"Be careful," he said, "to take plenty of powder and shot. The only argument these savages understand, is, as we used to say at school, the *argumentum ad hominem*. An ounce of lead is a powerful persuader !"

"I know all that," replied Harvey. "Don't bustle me, sir."

"Reject my advice, if you like. I know I am right, and I have your welfare at heart."

"Coach up those Limbians then, sir, and come over to Pisang as soon as you can ; we shall have hot work, and Jack will want friends."

"Which he shall find."

"I am going to tell the chiefs of my departure, sir, and shall be off in a twinkling. Good-bye !" said Harvey.

"Good-bye, and God bless you, my brave boy ! I will take care of your belongings here," replied Mr. Mole.

They shook hands, and Harvey hurried off.

He had determined to try and save Jack at all hazards.

The Limbians were sorry to lose his leadership, but they promised to obey Mr. Mole, whom they regarded as a great chief.

And they also undertook to start on the expedition as soon as possible.

They had made great progress in their drill, and had proved themselves expert shots.

Joining Monday, Harvey hurried down to the house to get his packages.

"I will see you off!" cried Mr. Mole. "I do not mind walking with you now Monday has taken off his grotesque dress, but if he were disguised as he was a short time back, I should have thought I was walking in the Zoo with the chimpanzee or the ourang outang's brother."

Harvey began to hum. "The O. K. thing at Limbi is walking in the Zoo!"

"Ah!" said Mr. Mole with a sigh. "What a thing youth is. I wish I had your spirits, Harvey?"

The latter pointed to an empty bottle, and replied—

"I think you have had your share, sir!"

"I mean animal spirits, Harvey. You have mistaken my remark."

Mr. Mole rose as he spoke, and staggered a little on one side.

"Dear me," he said, "this is odd; I appear to have lost my centre of gravity!"

"Groggy on your pins, eh, sir!" replied Harvey, laughing.

"Rather so, my juvenile but still intelligent friend. There is an inclination in my right leg to go sideways. This is more than odd—it is passing strange."

"Mind the wall, sir," exclaimed Harvey, as the late senior master of Pomona House came into violent collision with the bamboos.

"Your warning came too late, Harvey; I have collided, that is to say, struck, and the effect is painful."

"Which was the hardest, sir; your cocoanut or the wall?"

"Much of a muchness, Harvey," replied Mr. Mole, sitting down on the floor. "I do not think I will go with you, yet I hope you will manage to effect a start without my valuable assistance. I have over-fatigued myself to—"

day, and exhausted nature must have rest. Fare thee well !”

His head fell back, and he was soon snoring “thirteen to the dozen,” as Harvey said.

Harvey and Monday, laden with packages, now made their way to the coast.

It was growing late, and darkness would soon fall.

They got into the boat, and, hoisting the sail, began to leave Limbi behind them.

“Do you think you can manage to steer all serene at night ?” asked Harvey.

“Monday know him way, sare,” replied the black.

“All right. I leave it to you ; but don’t run us into any danger.”

Night fell, and Monday, looking at the stars, kept the boat’s head well before the wind.

They were both armed with revolvers and knives, while rifles lay at the bottom of the boat, ready for use at a moment’s notice.

It was clear that if they encountered twenty Pisangs they would not be taken at a disadvantage.

Their firearms would give them a superiority, provided they were not struck by spears or arrows.

In the use of the latter weapons all the natives of those islands were very expert.

The night passed quickly, as it does in those latitudes, and Harvey snatched a few hours’ sleep.

He dreamt that he saw Jack hanging on a high gibbet, with his enemies singing war-songs around him.

Waking in a fright, he found himself bathed in a cold sweat.

On the verge of the horizon was a dark speck.

“That’s land, Monday !” he exclaimed.

There was no answer.

Monday, worn out, had fallen asleep, and the boat had drifted at the mercy of the wind and waves.

It was lucky that the breeze was not a strong one, or they would have capsized.

They were travelling at a rapid pace towards the land, and it was evident they had been caught in a current, which set in strongly to the shore.

Shaking the black, Harvey succeeded in rousing him.

“Where the dickens are we ?” said Harvey.

"Monday go to sleep. That bad. Mast' Harvey him kick Monday, who much 'shamed," said the black, looking crestfallen.

"Never mind ; I suppose you couldn't help it. I shan't bully you, though you deserve a blowing up. Do you know what island that is ahead of us ?"

Monday shook his head.

He was out of his reckoning.

"This delay is vexatious," continued Harvey. "Every moment is precious. Jack's life may hang by a thread, as they say. Why the deuce couldn't you keep your swivel eye open ?"

"Monday big stupid donkey ; he worse than um child."

"I suppose we'd better run in and see. If it isn't Pisang, we must start again."

"Look !" cried Monday, as they neared a dangerous reef of coral.

"At what ?"

"That post, sare. That one flagstaff. This our island ; what we call Ship Island, you know. We live there once ; that where you save Monday from him enemies."

Harvey looked again, shading his face with his hand.

"You're right," he replied. "That's Mr. Mole's signal station. It is our island. Shall we land ?"

"If got time, sare."

"It won't make above an hour or two's difference, and we can take our bearings."

"See um old castle, Mast' Harvey ; that much jolly !" cried Monday, in delight.

"Yes, I should like to have a look at the old place."

"Monday him like it too. We very happy in um old castle, Mast' Harvey."

"We hadn't much to grumble at, if Hunston and his savages had let us alone. Do you think you could start afresh, now you know where you are ?"

"Start from here, sare ? Easy."

"And make Pisang ?"

"Pisang over there ; many, much miles away ;" replied Monday, pointing to the north-west, after taking his bearings.

"All right, steer steadily. Run her through the reef, and we'll have a squint round," exclaimed Harvey.

They had christened the boat "The Jack Harkaway,"

and riding the waters like a thing of life, she bounded joyously along, as if glad to revisit the old spot that gave her birth.

CHAPTER LV.

REVISITING THE CASTLE.

THERE was little difficulty in passing the reef during daylight, and it was with mingled emotions that Harvey stepped on that shore where he and Jack had landed, the latter taking possession of the island in the name of Queen Victoria.

Walking first to the signal station, he saw that the wind had torn the flag to rags, which fluttered feebly if not sadly in the breeze.

He then proceeded to the castle.

Nothing was to be seen but its blackened remains, for the fire kindled by the Pisangs had done its work effectually.

Some of the trees were throwing out tender shoots again, but the trunks were bare and black.

Everything of utility or value had been carried off.

It was a scene of wreck and desolation.

The birds had played havoc with the corn, and other creatures had routed amongst the potatoes, until the farm was like a wilderness choked up with weeds.

The skeletons of the Pisangs who were killed by the explosion, lay on the ground whitening in the sun.

"Who, would think," said Harvey, "that this was once a flourishing little settlement?"

"Him look wild enough now, sare," returned Monday.

Harvey strolled on a little further.

Before him was Maple's grave.

He remembered how tenderly they had laid the poor misguided boy in his last resting-place, and a tear fell from his eye.

The little mound was overrun with rank grass and weeds.

They had planted flowers upon it, which were choked by the luxuriant growth of the tropics.

The rough wooden cross, which Jack had in the piety of his heart erected, had fallen on one side.

Stooping down, Harvey took out his knife and cut away the grass and weeds, trimming it round neatly.

Then he replaced the cross, and firmly secured it.

"If ever I see his mother," he thought, "she will ask me about her boy."

He did all he could to pay respect to his memory, though that was little enough.

He was engaged in a perilous and desperate enterprise, and he did not know how soon he might be in a similar position.

Stricken down in his youth, and laid low in the cold unsympathising ground, with no kind hands to deck his grave and shed a tear to his memory.

It is in times of danger, and in the hour of solitude, that the thought of death affects us most.

Who shall say, that death does not lose half its terrors when we know that weeping friends are round us, and that sincere mourners will bear our body reverently to the grave?

Sinking on his knees, Harvey prayed shortly but fervently.

He prayed that the poor dead boy's sins might not be remembered against him.

He supplicated that he might be forgiven for his bad faith, and his desire to injure those who had endeavoured to be kind to him.

When he rose to his feet and returned to the ruins of the castle, his face was wet with tears that he could not suppress.

Monday had been watching him, and he said. "Why you cry, Mast' Harvey?"

Harvey made him no reply.

"Why you let fall tear, sare? Why you kneel down there, and put your face in your hand?" continued Monday.

"You don't understand our religion, Monday," replied Harvey. "That is a grave!"

"Some one dead lie there, sare?"

"Yes, a friend of mine; not much younger than I am."

"How him come to die, sare?"

"Perhaps I killed him. I know not. It was either Jack or myself, but we were fighting in self-defence. It is a sad story, Monday," said Harvey. "We won't dwell

upon it. Let us get back to the boat, and go on with the work we have in hand."

Monday held his head down, as if he wished to sympathise with his master's grief, and they slowly retraced their steps to the seaside.

Suddenly they heard a sound like the growling of a mastiff.

Though Harvey had been some months in the Archipelago, he did not understand noises made by animals half so well as Monday, who had been bred and born amongst them.

He was about to advance, when Monday laid his hand upon his arm.

"What the blazes is the row now?" asked Harvey, annoyed at the interruption.

Monday pointed to a clump of trees at one side of them.

"Tiger!" he answered, with an evidence of terror he could not conceal.

"Oh, Jerusalem!" replied Harvey. "I fancy I could wop my weight in wild-cats, but tigers are pussies of another colour."

They both drew back.

The growling increased in intensity.

Placing his mouth near the ground, the monster's noise reverberated around, until the dreadful roar could be heard for miles.

When the king of the forest is in a passion, every living thing within hearing is stricken with terror, even the birds ceased singing.

No other sound broke the stillness of the air.

Presently the beast emerged from her cover, and Monday declared she could smell human flesh.

She was a magnificent tigress, about four years old, and Harvey could not help admiring, her beautifully-marked skin, as she walked up and down under a tree, lashing her striped sides with her long tail, which she sometimes threw right over her back.

"I have seem them do that in the Zoo," said Harvey, in a whisper, as if speaking to himself. "That's just how they go on before feeding-time. She's getting excited. Softly, my pretty dear; I'm coming."

All at once she stooped the fore part of her body, put her ears back, and opened her huge cavernous mouth.

"Stand close, Monday," cried Harvey.

He levelled his rifle for he thought she was going to spring.

Monday trembled too much to allow his fire to be of any use.

With his quick eye Harvey saw this, and continued--

"Don't shoot. Hold your gun ready for me, if I don't stop her."

Monday could only nod his head, and Harvey heard his teeth chatter.

He had no time to say more.

Away she flew, making a splendid bound of many feet, eyes flashing, jaws open, paws outstretched.

Harvey took steady aim, and let her have his one barrel full in the chest.

Monday now recovered his presence of mind, and violently pulled his young master on one side.

It was lucky he did so, for the shot did not stop her.

Had he remained where he was, she would have alighted straight upon him, so well had she calculated the distance and her own power of springing.

Seizing Monday's gun, which, unlike the rifle, had two barrels, and was a breech-loader, Harvey fired twice quickly, not daring to take regular aim, and make a "pot-shot" of it from the shoulder.

He had dropped his own piece, and the infuriated creature fell upon it with a plunge, growling over it like a cat with a mouse.

She laid hold of it with her massive teeth, and twisting it as if it had been a straw, broke it in half.

Then she jumped up, staggered a few feet towards Harvey, and fell down dead.

He waited a minute or so, to see if she was really done for, and feeling satisfied that she was past further mischief, walked up to her and fired a revolver into her head.

"That will make sure," he said.

Monday also came up, and began to make faces at the dead tiger, just as if she could understand him.

He danced before her, spit at her, kicked her in the side, and pulled her ears in childish spite.

"What's the caper now?" asked Harvey. "The beast's dead."

"Tigers, sare, kill many Limbi people," replied Mon



J. H. "SEIZING MONDAY'S GUN, HARVEY FIRED TWICE, QUICKLY." Vol. II. Page 200.

day. "That's why me frighten. Now I tell her what I think of her."

And he began to abuse her and all her family, especially her father and mother, and her children or her cubs if she had any.

"You're a neat thing, in niggers, to go on like that," exclaimed Harvey, laughing.

"We believe," replied Monday, "that the tiger spirit listen to us. Ah!" he continued, "you old wretch, how many Limbis you eaten—how many Pisang? Your father is a coward, he fly away from a monkey; your mother never fight fair, and your family not worth one pig."

"Shut up," said Harvey. "You can't be such an ass as to think that the tiger can hear you. I thought you had thrown off your old superstitions. Try and be more sensible."

Monday did not speak any more, but he shook his head as if he had his own opinion about things in general, and that in particular.

"I should like that skin," continued Harvey. "Set to work and skin the beggar, and look slippery over it."

Monday produced his knife, and soon had the creature's handsome skin off.

He rubbed it with sand to clean it, and Harvey hung it over the side of the boat to dry in the sun.

"If ever we get back safe to Limbi, I'll keep that as a trophy. *Spolia opina*, as Mole would say," remarked Harvey.

Having embarked, they set sail, and by dint of tacking against the wind made fair progress.

Monday declared that he knew his way and that they would reach Pisang before night.

"If you go to sleep again, I'll pound you," said Harvey.

"No sleep any more, till land in Pisang, Mast' Harvey," replied Monday.

"Mind you don't, that's all!"

Harvey was dreadfully nervous about Jack.

He feared he was in great peril, for he knew Hunston's character, and his influence over the Pisangs.

Jack was an enemy to be got rid of for various reasons.

Nuratella had told the Pisangs that an invasion was thought of, and that Jack was the heart and soul of the Limbians.

Therefore, to kill him and get him out of the way was half the battle.

"Only let me have a slap at them, and I'll give them what for," said Harvey between his teeth.

The adventure he had embarked in, however, was more hazardous than even he imagined.

It is one of the advantages of being young—or, shall we say, one of the disadvantages—that we do not stop to consider consequences.

Young people usually act upon impulse, and impulsive actions are very often successful.

Monday was right as to the duration of the voyage.

It was not longer than seven hours, and they reached an island, which he declared to be Pisang, before night fell.

Running the boat ashore, Harvey jumped out, and said—

"What's to be done now?"

Monday did not know.

"I leave all to Mast' Harvey," he said. "Where him go, Monday follow."

"There is such a thing as going into the lion's den, and I don't mean to do that," answered Harvey.

"They have one big town like us," continued Monday; "it call Palembang. Once we have small towns."

"Villages?"

"Yes; but when war come all villages burn, now we all live together. Our town call Tompano, their town Palembang."

"Then there is not much chance of finding any one in the wilds. Shall we camp in the open, and keep watch and watch, or sleep in the boat?" said Harvey.

Monday could not offer an opinion.

He was not at any time very brilliant, and was rather formed for obeying than leading.

He had come to rescue Harkaway, and would fight for him, but how to set about rescuing him he knew no more than a baby.

"I think," said Harvey, after some reflection, "that we had best camp in the woods, and work our way up to Palembang in the morning. You speak the same language, as they do, you are all a species of Malay. Can't you get into the town, and find out what's going on?"

"Yes, sare ; Monday do that, though they cut um throat if they catch him."

"But you musn't allow yourself to be caught ; we can't spare you, Monday."

"When um go ? Now ?" asked the worthy fellow.

"On consideration, no," replied Harvey. "We'll wait for morning, which will come in a few hours, and then we will work our way into the interior."

Hiding the boat as well as they could, they took a good supply of arms and ammunition, and made a camp in the woods, formed of the boughs of trees which they tore down.

"You slept last night ; itis my turn now. Though, in fact, we were both in fault," exclaimed Harvey.

"Monday take first watch, sare."

"All right. Keep your weather-eye open, and kick me at the slightest sound."

Harvey was soon asleep.

Monday stood with his gun tightly clasped, listening for the least noise with an eagerness that the danger of their position rendered necessary.

He was sorry for his fault the night before, and wished to make amends.

They were in the enemies' country, and the least cessation in vigilance might cost them their lives.

"Monday near eaten once," he said to himself ; "no catch and try eat him second time."

They were about two miles inland, and, though they did not know it, they were not more than half a dozen miles from Palembang.

During the day the preparations for hanging Jack were finished.

On the morrow he was to die.

CHAPTER LVI.

THE ÉSCAPE.

WE must leave Harvey and his faithful follower in their rude camp, while we return to Harkaway.

The position in which we saw him last was not a pleasant one.

But he had kept up his spirits.

From a short distance the sounds of revelry reached him, and he concluded that the Pisangs were making merry at his approaching death.

Rude songs were being sung, and the sound of musical instruments could be distinguished at intervals.

"They are making a night of it. I should like to have a look at them," he thought. "There is time yet."

Climbing up to the roof, as he had done before, he saw his guard standing in front of his prison door.

Lamps trimmed with palm-oil, illuminated a large, barn-like building near Hunston's house.

It was from this erection that the noise proceeded.

Jack rightly supposed this to be the council-chamber, for it was very similar to the one in Limbi, where the chiefs assembled for the discussion of public business.

One of his guards he recognized as Buru, who had accompanied the Tuan Biza on his first expedition to the island.

The other he had heard addressed as Padang.

Throwing his voice in the direction of the council-chamber, he imitated Hunston, and said—

"Buru, it is our wish that you bring the white prisoner before us."

Buru was not at all astonished at this command, and at once proceeded to put it in execution.

Opening the door of the prison, he exclaimed—

"Come with me. You must appear before the council."

"All right," answered Jack. "What is going on?"

"All the chiefs in Pisang sing the song of triumph, because the white man is in their power."

"And a jolly noise they make. Will they give me anything to drink?" asked Jack.

"They have the palm spirit of Pisang, but water is the fare of the condemned," answered Buru.

The guards put themselves on the side of Jack, and conducted him to the council.

He passed through an open door, and found himself in the presence of about fifty chiefs, who were sitting on mats, placed round the side of the hall.

Hunston was at one end, and the Tuan Biza at the other.

Both of them occupied a seat slightly raised above the others, as a token of high rank and precedence.

"How is this?" asked the Tuan Biza.

Hunston was about to ask the same question, when Jack made him say—

"I sent for him, O chief, to make sport of him."

An old chief rose and said—

"It is cowardly to insult the fallen."

"If it is the pleasure of our white friend, why do you, O Wahar, fly in his face?" inquired the Tuan Biza.

The old chief was about to protest that he had not intended to offend, when Jack imitating his voice, said—

"The white chief is not worthy to be one of us. Let us hang him to-morrow instead of the prisoner."

An indescribable confusion arose at this suggestion, and another chief rose.

But before he could open his mouth Jack made him exclaim—

"The proposal is good. Let us hang him, and dance over his grave."

The uproar increased.

Making Hunston speak, Jack said—

"The Tuan Biza and his chiefs are old women. What care I for them? I will fight them all single-handed, and give their bodies to the birds, and their wives shall lament them in vain."

"What?" cried the Tuan Biza. "Do you attack me, O Hunstani?" for so they had altered his name. "You dare not come to me, and say that I am a woman!"

"Daren't I?" Jack caused Hunston to answer. "You are worse than the timid deer, and your soul is as a reed."

"I have slain my foes in battle," replied the Tuan Biza. "You speak bitterly, O Hunstani, but I have the power to make you eat your words!"

"I laugh at your beard," said Jack, still making Hunston speak. "You shall die, and your grave shall be defiled!"

"This is too much! Give me my spear!" shouted the Tuan Biza.

Changing his tone, Jack threw his voice close to Buru, and made him say—

"The white chief will eat you, O Tuan Biza, for he says truly that your soul is as a reed."

"Oh!" replied the Tuan Biza, "you are against me a-ah? Take that!"

He had seized his spear by this time, and dealt Buru a heavy blow over the head with it.

Now Buru was also a great chief in his own estimation, and he did not like this sort of treatment.

So he retaliated and gave the Tuan Biza a blow with a sort of mallet he carried, and hit him under the ear.

This caused him to roll over and over, uttering dismal cries.

Some friends of the Tuan Biza resented this, and attacked Buru. He was supported by Padang, his companion, and they returned the blows with interest.

Jack jumped on a rude table, and surveyed the scene with satisfaction.

Several chiefs, thinking Hunston the cause of all the mischief, made a charge at him, against which he defended himself with difficulty.

Seeing he was getting roughly handled, Jack made his way to that end of the room, and pulled him into a corner.

The fight had now become general, and the Pisangs were engaged in a hard hand-to-hand fight amongst themselves.

The jealousy existing at all times among those distinguished warriors was easily excited, and they were only too glad of a quarrel.

During a disturbance of this sort they could pay off old scores.

They had been drinking their palm spirit, and were more or less excited by the songs they had been singing.

Hunston had been disarmed in the conflict, and looked sullenly at Jack, who held before his eyes the knife which Emily had supplied him with.

"You have got this up," said Hunston, "but you can not escape."

"That's all you know about it," replied Jack; "but don't tremble; I'm not a coward. I might kill you in a stand-up fight, but I shall not harm you now."

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